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## **VEDIC CULTURE**



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# VEDIC CULTURE

By

GANGA PRASAD UPADHYAYA M. A.

DELHI

SARVADESHIKA ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA

1949

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L. Kundan Lal, S/o L. Shadiram,  
Ink Merchant, Dariba, Delhi





10, Ramnagar,  
New Delhi.

Dated 7-4-49.

Dear G.P.Upadhyaya ji,

Many thanks for your letter dated 6-4-49, inquiring from me the names of my wife *Lilawati* and son *Prem Nath Gupta* and their photos for use in publishing the *Vedic Culture*.

I desire that the book may have a mention of my elder brother *L. Kundan Lal*, Ink Merchant, Dariba, Delhi and therefore, send you two of his photos. You can select any one and get a block prepared. I give below some events of his life:

*L. Kundan Lal was born of a respectable Vaishya family at Gwalior in 1927 Vikrami. His father, L. Shadi Ram Farrukhnagarya was employed as a Shirastedar in Judicial and Education Departments of the Gwalior Government and his mother Shrimati Bhagwati was a devoted Hindu Devi. He was brought up, educated there and was employed as a Shirastedar of Judicial Department and a Police Inspector of the State up to 1958 when he moved to Delhi to serve his uncle L. Hardeo Sahai, Ink Merchant, Dariba, Delhi in his old age. He always respected his elders and supported his youngers. He built a small Dharmashala at Gark-mukteshwar, District Meerut, in his name and also a house to support a Piau (पिऊ) there in memory of his wife Shri Singhari Devi.*

*L. Kundan Lal belonged to Sanatana Dharma but his ideas were so much changed by the Hyderabad Satyagraha and Shiva Temple Movement (शिवमन्दिर आन्दोलन) of Delhi that he directed his brother....., President, Arya Samaj Pahargunj Delhi, to bring Satyartha Prakasha and a photo of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati and on his being questioned remarked that Arya Samaj is a true and faithful supporter of the Hindu nation.*

*In 1996V, he left this world, then giving whole of his property to his only younger brother....., Superintendent, Office of Accountant General, Delhi, for the use of latter's son Prem Nath Gupta, who also died in 2001V.*

With best respects to self and Mataji and  
Namaste to Bhai ji.

Yours sincerely,

JAGANNATH

## FOREWORD

Those who have formed their opinions about the Vedas and Vedic culture from the writings of foreign orientalists and European historians, will find in Mr. Upadhyaya's book on Vedic Culture plenty of material to revise and correct their views. Mr. Upadhyaya, whose book gives ample proof of his erudition and careful study of the Vedas, has succeeded in demolishing the *a priori* conclusions of non-Hindu writers on the subject. He has pointed out that the Vedas contain positive and ample indication of a greatly advanced civilization and culture as witnessed by copious references to subjects like agriculture, to various kind of food grains, care of cattle, arts and crafts, industry, trade and commerce, and to the art of building residential houses and to the composition and classification of Vedic society in accordance with qualifications and occupations and character of various sections of the community. Mr. Upadhyaya has also shown by many quotations from the Vedas what the ideal of family life and conjugal relations should be according to the Vedas.

A notable feature of Mr. Upadhyaya's work is the distinction that he has drawn between Vedic

culture and the current materialistic notions of civilization and culture. He has pointed out that the Vedic conception of culture is emphatically theistic and the whole trend of Vedic teachings is spiritual development, not only in one life time but in life after life till perfection is attained.

I have no doubt that the book will be found most instructive by all those interested in history and sociology.

10-A, Cavalry Lines,  
Delhi.

Gokul Chand Narang

31-3-1949.

## PREFACE

Culture is the most confused, yet, the most exploited word in the modern world. Various people use it in various senses. All nations claim to have their own cultures, but all cultures severally or jointly could not be successful in stopping the hand of barbarism, which has bled humanity white and killed humanitarianism outright. Today violence stalks free, committing havoc in all walks of life.

My studies in the Vedic literature have convinced me that it is only the Vedic conception of culture that can serve as healing balm to the wounded humanity and it is to fulfil that purpose that I have attempted in this book to delineate as briefly as possible a few traits of the Vedic culture.

I am grateful to Sir Gokul Chand Narang, K.T., former Minister of Education in the Punjab, and an eminent writer on cultural topics, for the favour he has done me by writing a Foreword to this book. My thanks are also due to Pandit Dharma Deva, Vidyavachaspati, for having read the manuscript and offered useful suggestions.

I am also grateful to Shriyuta Jagannath Ji, an ardent lover of the Arya Samaj and the Arya Samajic literature, for the munificence, without which the book could not have seen the light of the day. His timely financial aid has relieved me of a great anxiety. His devotion to the cause of

the Arya Samaj is great and so is of his late lamented elder brother, Shri Kundan Lal Ji whose memory has been associated with the publication of this book. Shri Jagannath Ji's letter is appended to this book.

G. P. U.

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Pandit Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya



OM

# VEDIC CULTURE

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT DOES CULTURE MEAN

The English word '*Culture*' comes from a Latin root '*colere*,' which means to 'till' or to 'worship'. The first meaning is implied in the word 'culture' and the second in 'cult'. Whether the root is the same in both cases or two different roots have come to be identified by undergoing certain changes is a question for philological researchists. But 'cult' and 'culture' are not too remote. To 'till' and to 'worship' appear to be two different processes, but if we just think what worship is meant for, we shall find that tilling and worship have certain kinship which it is not difficult to detect.

That 'culture' is a particle in the words 'agriculture' or 'horti-culture' is by no means accidental. The true meaning of the word culture is inherent there. Tilling is a process whereby the potentialities of a seed are brought into actualization. The tree exists in the seed though in a potential form. What we call 'agriculture' is a process whereby

we bring those potentialities into action. And the best 'tiller' or 'agriculturist' is one that does not allow any of the potentialities to remain undeveloped or die out. 'Culture' is similarly a process by which the potentialities inherent in a soul are brought to perfect actualization. The world is a garden. The souls or animate beings are tiny seeds with a store of potentialities inherent in them. The richness of soil and the efficiency of gardening are necessary for the full growth of seeds. Similarly, certain environments and conditions are essential for bringing the potentialities of the animate beings to full development.

Happily, Sanskrita language has a word which is a most appropriate synonym of the word culture. That is word *krishi* (कृषि) which also means 'to till'. *Krishti* (कृष्टि) is another word derived from *krishi*. This word has very often been used in the Vedas. *Krishti* \* (कृष्टि) in the Vedas means a fully cultured man. Sometimes it means a common man too. But the idea is the same. The English word 'man' can easily be traced to Sanskrita 'Manu' or 'Manushya' which means a thinking being. Similarly, '*krishti*' which has commonly come to mean

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\* vide Rg Veda I.4-6. उत नः सुभगाँ अरिर्वेचियुदंस्म  
कृष्टयः । स्यामेदिन्द्रस्य शर्मणि ॥ (ऋ० १।४।६)

‘man’ is really speaking one whose potentialities have bloomed forth into a full tree.

What does ‘culture’ mean then ? Culture includes all things, big or small, from beginning to end, which contribute towards the actualization of a sentient being’s potentialities or seed powers (बीज शक्ति in Sanskrita). It is a sum total of many things which play their part in their own places, but whose function, is severally and jointly to turn the seed into a fully-grown tree. *Krishti* or man is that tree, and all those small or great things which help in the fullest development of this man go by the collective term ‘culture’.

We are habituated to speak of culture or cultures rather loosely, just as we are accustomed to talk of ‘man’. A half developed child is a man. All are men, from devil upto angel, from an ignorant wretch up to a wise man. They are men, not because of the intrinsic connotation of the term ‘man’ but because of the analogy which only makes language possible. Man means a thinking being. But an unthinking fool is also a man, not because the term ‘man’ etymologically holds good in his case, but because usage has extended the term, from inner meanings to the outer form. The same holds good in the case of culture or cultures.

There is good agriculture and there is bad agriculture. Good agriculture means all the processes that eke out all that lies in the seed, without allowing any part thereof to die out. Bad agriculture produces harvest, but not so excellently. An untrained farmer tills the soil, sows the seed, irrigates the farm and reaps the harvest. But the yield of his farm is not so good or so much as that of a trained farmer's field. There was something wrong some where in the way in which the untrained farmer worked. Perhaps the soil was bad or was not well-tilled and well manured. Perhaps there was too much or too little watering. Perhaps the season chosen was inappropriate or full amends were not made for the defects of the weather. Perhaps a good deal was allowed to waste while reaping the harvest. Any one or all these factors combined stood in the way of the fullest possible yield and we say "the man is a poor agriculturist". A scientifically trained farmer would be more cautious and would work differently.

The same is the case with culture. There are cultures and cultures. The best culture is that which contributes to the fullest growth of man without handicaps or wastage. That which fails is, to the extent of its failure, a bad culture. Just

as there are all kinds of agriculturists in this world,—good, bad and indifferent,—similarly there are all sorts of cultures which produce man, but with different results qualitatively or quantitatively or both. Of late, there has been a tendency to discuss things in the terms of culture. When a nation declares war with another nation, it does not say, “We want such and such territory or such and such market for commerce.” It says, “We fight for culture. We stand for cultural growth of a section of humanity.” How far this plea is right is a difficult question. But one thing is clear. Such plea pays and pays well. It makes the offender appear less selfish. It successfully invites the sympathies of the world. It gives a white face to the black interior. All the wars of this century and the last have been cultural wars as far as proclamations of the fighting parties are concerned. Both claim culture as the motive of the war. We indulge in killing man in order that ‘man’ be best developed. In other words we burn seeds in order that they may better germinate. Black selfishness is coated with white culture. Misery, blood-shed and chaos are the yields. The reason is that we have forgotten the real significance of culture. A set of formulas, fanciful or formed with selfish ends in view, sell in the market with



fascinating labels as this culture or that culture. All that glitters is not gold, but glittering is a widely acknowledged mark of gold and it is the only thing that sells in the market. There have sprung up organizations with glittering names (religion, philanthropy, sociology etc.) which advertise their goods with all the ability that a propagandist can command. They claim superiority for their own set of formulae.

A poor customer is bewildered at the display of so many varieties of cultures in the market. Which to follow or which to reject? How to discriminate between pure gold and alloy? Yet, there is a silver lining to the dark cloud. When there is a cry for culture, it must be followed by a desire to know what culture is. Fraud can work for a time and to a limited circle. Truth must prevail in the end. Our bitter experiences must lead to inquisitiveness and inquisitiveness to search after truth.

This has come to be true. For a few centuries, western countries have been holding up their glittering cultures for public view. They have been successful in throwing into background past cultures. It was thought half a century ago that the long strides which scientific advancement has made recently will bring new heavens and man would

after all find a panacea for all ills. But the last few decades of strife and animosities have, proved beyond doubt that we were mistaken. We threw our pearls and took instead delusive gauds. Not only could we not turn grey sheep into white, our white ones have become black. Man sought to be an angel and he became a brute. We have at least been convinced that we are in a fairyland where there is nothing substantial.

And things are not what they seem. If all that so long and so far passed by the name culture has resulted into the burning of our farms and destroying our harvest, we must try to find out where the mistake lies. What is true culture? That is the question. The question must be answered before we set out on our journey. What is the use of crying when the whole milk has been spilt? If at the end of our life, we find out that we took to a wrong road, of what avail is such a discovery? The failures of our forefathers must be our guide.

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## CHAPTER II

### CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

It has often been asked if *culture* and *civilization* are synonymous and if not what is the relation between the two. In many cases culture and civilization are interchangeable terms. A cultured nation is a civilized nation and a civilized nation is a cultured nation. But going deep we find that, though allied, they are two different things.

The word civilization has come to have a set meaning. Modern writers have dubbed certain nations as civilized and certain as semi-barbarian or barbarian. In the terminology of the nineteenth or twentieth century all white nations are civilized, all yellow nations semi-civilized, and all black skinned, as black souled or uncivilized. It appears that our skins are like transparent glass-vessels exhibiting the colour of the substance which they contain. How can a skin be white unless it encloses a white heart? And how can a black skin contain a heart which is anything but black. Then all that is European is civilized and also all that has migrated

from Europe. The Americans are civilized because their fore-fathers migrated from Europe. The rest of America is un-civilized. The Australians and the white population of Eastern and South Africa are also civilized. And for the same reason, as the rest of the world ! Non-Europeans are therefore un-civilized. What is the criterion? White and non-white colour. Then there is one more criterion. All Christians are civilized and all non-Christians non-civilized. A white European Christian is therefore thrice blessed and thrice-civilized. He is civilized by dint of his country, by dint of his colour and by dint of his religion. What virtues make him so is immaterial. What vices exclude others from the zone of civilization is also immaterial. To refer to a famous writer on civilization, Mr. Clive Bell, we are told that he rules out "from among the characteristics of civilization such qualities as justice, humanitarianism, respect for human life etc.....because they are found, perhaps in a much greater degree, among the less civilized and un-civilized peoples." But that is what a self-supposed civilized man thinks for himself. There are others too who do think in the same terms. Which man is there, however ignorant, however wretched and however

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\* The Spirit of Indian Civilization, by D. N. Roy.

shabby, who might think that he is uncivilized, unless compelled to do so under physical pressure ? The Chinese think that they are the only chosen people—wise, holy and civilized. All others are inferiors. A Moslem of Arabia thinks that light first dawned upon Mohammad the prophet. Before his advent it was all dark in Arabia and in the world. And even now those are civilized who have got their hearts illumined by Mohammad's light. Ask an orthodox Hindu-Brahman of Banaras. He thinks that others are so un-civilized that if it were given to him, he would not tolerate even their touch.

But if civilization is not a meaningless term, it needs a more rational treatment. In the previous chapter we saw what culture means ? Cannot civilization too submit to such an examination ?

'Civilize' is a verb from "civil". Civil means social or pertaining to society. Civilization is, thus, something which makes man social. Man is, no doubt, a social animal. He loves society. Society-hating men are only exceptions. But the size of the Society is not fixed and it much depends upon the inner qualities of a man. The members of a society are compelled to surrender some of their interests to the well-being of other members. It is the basis of the formation of a society. My

society, therefore, depends, in nature as well as in size, upon my capacity to surrender my interests for the sake of others. My heart is the hall in which the members of my society sit. How capacious is my heart is a question. Whom and how far can I accommodate in this hall ? To socialize myself means, therefore, to widen my heart, to make room in it for the greatest number of sentient beings. Big halls of brick and mortar do not make a real society. It is the largeness of the heart which is needed. This is the esoteric meaning of civilization and really speaking every man is civilized to the extent of the largeness of his heart. But there is an exoteric meaning also. Dr. Dharendra Nath Roy in his "The Spirit of Indian Civilization" asks a pertinent question. "Is there any civilization without some form of agriculture, industry, language, literature, arts, science, morality, philosophy and religion?" No, truly no. But why? Are the nine things enumerated here arbitrarily fixed? No they have a firmer basis. They all spring originally from a desire of man to surrender his own interests to the welfare of others.

Modern advancement of science has done much good to humanity. It has provided man with unprecedented comforts and conveniences. It has added lustre to human living. But there is one

very great loss that it has done to mankind. It has narrowed down man's heart. The trend of thinking of Darwin and his successors has been to impress upon man that selfishness reigns supreme in nature. "The survival of the fittest" is their motto. And unfortunately "the fittest" in their sense means "the physically strongest." A strong fish eats up a weaker one. This is the law of the dwellers of the ocean. The wolf eats the lower animals who are weaker than he. The lion is the strongest of all, therefore he eats up all. This is the law of the Jungle. Man is after all a part of nature. How can he stand an exception to the general rule? It is why Bell says that humanitarianism is no qualification of a civilized people. It exists where there is no civilization at all. "Struggle for existence" has, of late, been too common a phrase. It has narrowed down the walls of our heart. We think that the only lesson that nature teaches is that we cannot exist unless we kill others. Killing is, therefore, a characteristic of civilization. It has succeeded in receiving testimonials from the civilized world. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, the whole of Asia was dark and uncivilized in the eye of the Western World. In the beginning of the twentieth century, a small portion of Asia came into lime-light. It was

Japan. The Japanese boasted that as they did not learn how to kill, they were un-civilized. Now that they killed Russians and proved to the world that they had a capacity to kill, they were allowed a place in the galaxy of civilized people. Their yellow colour became white and they came to be respected. What is the lesson that humanity learnt from it? If you want to be civilized, give up this milk of humanitarianism. Mercy is the weakness of a timid brain. The strong are never merciful. "Mercy is a double blessing" says Shakespeare. "Mercy is all-round curse" says the modern scientist.

But does this attitude of mind make him social or civil? Does it make him "civilized"? Is cruelty to others the only lesson which nature teaches? Is man made to follow the example of the fish or the wolf? Are there no better preceptors? Can we exist at all if struggle for existence is the sole occupant of our thought? Reader, just think of your birth. What were you when you were born? A tiny drop of blood, with no power for struggle. Your very existence hung in the balance. The mother to whom you owe your being was constantly thinking of your life, at the expense of her own. She invited untold sufferings to herself in order that you might



live. She risked her very life for your sake. She was ready to die for you. This is the first pattern of life that you began to experience. It is rather unfortunate that you were unfit to observe it at your birth. And it is a hundred times more unfortunate that now that you have power to see, you shut your eyes against it. It is written in the Shatapatha Brahmana that mother is one's first guru or preceptor. It is in more senses than one that the maxim holds good. Not only does mother give us suck, or teach us language, she puts before us an example which is the basis of all civilization. It is not the struggle for one's own existence, but struggle for the existence of others. What would have been our fate if the survival of the strongest were the law? And where shall we exist if only the strongest are allowed to survive? The mother is surely stronger than the child. And yet the child survives the mother. Why? Because the mother surrenders some of her might to the well-being of her weaker babe. This is the germ of civilization which nature has put into the nature of our mothers.

Ekoham Bahusyam (एको ऽ हं बहुस्याम्)

(I am one, let me be many).

This is the wish of every parent. And it is this wish which ought to be the basis of all society. It is a pity that the modern scientist overlooks this law which is omnipotent and omni-present. It reigns the land as much as the air or the ocean. We say that nature is a great killer. We begin to follow nature in its work of killing. We want to be a great killer, so that we might be more in tune with nature. But we forget that nature bears too. Killing is not its first action. It first bears life, then sustains it. It is only after these two actions that the third action, that of killing, takes place. She first bears, then kills. We do not bear but kill. Do we not begin at the wrong end of the line? If motherness is eliminated from the world, if we succeed in driving out from nature all that goes by the name kindness, what society will there be? What civilization? What is then the meaning of civilization? Civilization, as we have already said, is the act of civilizing, the act by which we become civil or social, we learn how to live in a society, how to surrender our interests for the interests of our fellow beings.

What is, then, the connection between culture and civilization?

Civilization is a part of culture, as much as it helps the actualization of our seed powers. Cul-

ture is a wider term. It is much more than civilization. A people may be civilized and yet uncultured. They may remain in society, a well cemented society, and yet their natures may not be fully developed and much of their valuable parts may either die out or remain undeveloped. All true culture needs civilization. But all civilization does not contribute culture. In order to be most helpful to culture, a civilization ought to be based upon certain virtues, which if absent, will make it undesirable as a culture-making agency.

It is true that man is a social animal. But besides being a member of a society, he is also an individual. It is individuals that make a society. We have to take notice of both the factors if we want to arrive at truth. Society is no doubt a potent factor, but it is only a factor. The equally potent is the other factor and that is individuality. In our personal culture (i.e. actualization of our potentialities), we not only borrow from others. Our own contribution is also very important. Civilization if divorced from this viewpoint becomes stale. It loses the zest which is the salt of life. In making estimation of civilization, the calculators have too often neglected this point and the result has been disastrous.

### CHAPTER III

## THE VEDAS ON CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

We have already said that the Vedic word '*Krishti*' ( कृष्टि ) which is synonymous with '*man*' gives a comprehensive idea of what culture means. The very existence of such a word in the Vedic terminology speaks very highly of the Vedic literature. Another Vedic word for culture is "*Sanskriti*"\* with the root '*kri*' to do, and prefix '*Sam*' meaning well. *Sanskriti* (संस्कृति) would literally mean purification or refinement which ultimately means

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\* अर्च्छित्रस्य ते देव सोम सुवीर्यस्य रायस्पोषस्य ददितारः स्वाम ।

सा प्रथमा संस्कृतिर्विश्ववारा म प्रथमो वरुणो मित्रो ऽग्निः ॥

(यजुर्वेद ७।१४)

May we, O radiant Soma, be the keepers of thine uninjured strength and growth of riches.

This is the all bounteous Consecration: he the first, Varuna, Mitra and Agni. (Griffiths).

I am tempted to translate thus:—O peace-giving God, may we be the preservers of thy uninterrupted strength-giving and enriching gift. This is the foremost all bounteous Culture, O adorable, well-wisher of all.

growth. When a seed is put into the soil, its outer covering begins to decay because it is not required for growth. When purified of all the outer appendages only can a seed germinate. The outer shell was an obstruction. When it was done away with, the real seed began to grow. The soul is also covered with outer-coatings, a non-soul-matter, so to speak, which though it has a value of its own, is in reality an obstacle. *Sanskriti* means its elimination, so that the inner qualities may be allowed the fullest play without any hamper. '*Krishi*' and '*Sanskriti*' both mean culture because culture does not mean the growth of outer covering. It deals directly with inner essence. Where this inner element is missing, it may be anything (pomp, show or even illusion) but not culture. Think of a diseased body wrapped in rich clothes or a strong body containing a diseased heart or an apparently sound mind with evil thoughts. You cannot call it a healthy or desirable condition. Similarly, culture is *Krishi* or growth of the inner-most self as well as *Sanskriti* or elimination of what is foreign. The real growth always needs the elimination of foreign matter, because foreign matter always hampers growth. Just as dust coming from outside and sticking to the limbs of our body closes up the tiny pores and

obstructs the inner processes of growth, similarly our real culture is obstructed by outer matter.

The Vedas have another very significant word which we cannot ignore in this connection. It is 'sabhyata' (सभ्यता). It is for all practical purposes a synonym of 'civilization', the process of making ourselves social. 'Sabhyata' is an abstract noun from 'Sabha (सभा). A 'Sabha' in its turn has an etymology which is wonderfully illuminative. 'Sabha' may be derived from 'bha' to shine and 'sa' a prefix denoting the idea of 'together'. 'Sabha' means that the individuals of which try to make others shine, so that the lustre arising out of each individual may collectively form a centre of light. Think of the sun and his tiny rays. Each ray has a light of its own, but it does not make the sun. All the rays have to so combine together that each makes a certain amount of contribution to the central store and they all together make what goes by the name Sun. 'Sabha' or society needs a number of shining individuals which or who put together might make a great store-house of light, the light which belongs to the whole collectively, and to each partially. The following Sanskrit couplet explains the idea rather fully.

न सा सभा यत्र न भाति कश्चित्, न सा सभा यत्र विभाति चैकः ।  
सभा तु सैवास्ति यथार्थरूपा, परस्परं यत्र विभान्ति सर्वे ॥

That is not a 'Sabha' where no body shines. Nor is that a 'Sabha' in which there shines only one individual. The Sabha in real sense, is that where all shine together, one helping another to shine.

This is the underlying idea of the word 'Sabha' which means society. This same should be the idea underlying '*Sabhyata*' or civilization. That civilization which misses this important factor is no civilization. The idea is most beautifully put in the concluding hymn of the Rg. Veda (X-191).\*

•1. Mighty God, thou hast provided the world with all that is necessary. Thou shinest in every part of the Universe. Bring us all treasures.

2. Assemble, speak together, let your minds be all of one accord, as sages of yore, understood their separate parts and enjoyed their share.

\* ममभिद् युक्ते वृक्षगने विष्णुर्नय आ ।

उड पद ममिध्यमे स ना असून्या शर ॥१॥

तगच्छध्वस ।दध्वस वो मनामि जानताम् ।

दना भाग यथा पूर्वे तजानाना उपासते ॥२॥

नानो नत्र सगिति समानी समान ...:सह चित्तमयाम् ।

तमान नत्रमभिमत्रये नः न गने । वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥३॥

न-ानी व प्राकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः ।

समानमःतु वो मनोयथा व. मसुहासति ॥४॥

3. The cause is common, common the assembly, common the mind, so be their thoughts united.

A common purpose do I lay before you, your common (united) oblation do I proffer.

4. One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of one accord. Let your mind be united and your agreements be perfectly united.”

One, and very important mark of civilization therefore, is community of purpose, community of mind, community of language and community of action.

All civilized people act as one united people. All uncivilized people behave differently. One more thing that the Veda emphasizes is that mere collection of individuals is no society. It may be a mob or a crowd. In Sanskrita language, there are two words which are expressive of the idea of community of purpose. A collection of individuals may be *Samaja* (समज) or *Samaaja* (समाज) Sheep, goats, or buffaloos sitting together make a *Samaja* (समज). Why ! the lower animals have neither a community of purpose nor that of language. They are gregarious, no doubt. But their coming together is more or less instinctive Nature some-how draws them together; they are not conscious of it. But the members of a society



should have a common purpose. Their ends must be the same and the means of achieving those ends must also be the same. This is the meaning of civilization or socialization.

But the quality of a civilization depends upon its utility as a means of culture. Does a particular civilization contribute towards the actualization of the seed-powers of the individuals which form a society ? And if it does, to what degree ? Is it not a civilization which develops one part at the expense of others ? Are not the potentialities of a certain portion of the society being ignored or atrophied ? Is the growth symmetrical ? If not, a civilization, however glittering, loses its cultural value. The Veda Mantra emphasizes this idea in the word *susahasati* (सुसहासति) which means total agreement or collaboration of parts.

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## CHAPTER IV

### ON EQUALITY

Unity and diversity are the two main aspects of the Universe. It is called universe because here is a peculiar unity pervading it—a factor which harmonizes all its different constituents. Yet these constituents are diverse and many. If this aspect is to be emphasized, it would rather be a multiverse, a collection of many items. But as it is something more than mere collection—the constituents being inter-connected and working in harmony, “universe” is preferable to multiverse.

But unity and diversity both preclude the idea of equality. If it is all one, it does not admit of equality. If they are many, as we see they are, they cannot be perfectly equal. It is often said that all beings are equal in God’s sight. Happily, the Vedas nowhere deal with such a nonsense. It is foolish to say that all beings are equal in God’s sight. If God has eyes at all, he must see things just as he has made them. We do not see equality in the world; no possessor of healthy vision does so.

Is not an elephant bigger than an ant, and an ant strikingly smaller than an elephant ? God has made them and made them so. If He meant anything meaningful in His having made them so, why should He see them equal ? Then no two men are identical or almost equal. How can we ignore all these distinctive features which make two men two and not one ? Where is then equality in the world ? The slogan of equality is, therefore, a myth, raised by some thoughtless persons, perhaps to dupe humanity.

This question is very necessary in dealing with 'culture'. The individuals who need culture are not all at the same footing. Their starting points are different. They begin at different stages of life. Had they been the same, the question of culture would have been much easier. A simple programme would have done. Think of a school with boys of the same size, same age, same capabilities, same potentialities, same proclivities, same aim and same means, i.e., holding perfect equality. How easy would it be for the teacher to deal ? But such fortunate schools and fortunate teachers exist only in imagination. The fact is that no two beings are on the same plane. A wise teacher dealing with a dozen or two pupils with diverse tastes and diverse qualities, first

strikes the greatest common measure '(G. C. M.) and starting there, takes care all along to make a judicious adjustment of their differences. They did not start at one point. They were different when they began, they are different when they continue and they will be different when they finish. What is true of the school children is equally true of the whole world.

This makes 'culture' an awfully complex thing. The Divine Gardener finds in this garden, called the world, seeds of different qualities and different potentialities. They have different requirements. The same amount of ploughing, the same manuring and the same watering would not do. What is meat for one may be poison for another. Go to any garden and observe closely the working of the plants. It is this diversity of seeds which presents a great difficulty to the gardener. Here it is that the gardenership of the gardener is required. What is applicable to the garden on a small scale is true in the case of the great world of which the garden is a tiny bit. How well has the Veda said :—

देवस्त्वष्टा सविता विश्वरूपः पुपोष प्रजाः पुरुषा जजान ।

इमा च विश्वा भुवनान्यस्य महद् देवानामसुरत्वमेकम् ।

(Rg. Veda III-53.19)

Tvashtar the God, the omniform creator, begets and feeds mankind in *various manner*. His,

verily, are all these living creatures. Great is the God's supreme and sole dominion." (Note :— What 'Griffith translates as 'mankind' literally means creatures).

Thus it is clear that in this great world of the Great God, no two things are equal. There is a Persian proverb, "God did not make five fingers equal."

It would have been a foolish God, or rather anti-god, who could have ventured to give five equal fingers to a man's hand.

Why was this inequality designed? The answer is quite clear. To give them a harmony. Exactly five fingers could not have worked harmoniously. Think of a body in which the head and the foot are equal in size, equal in form and equal in position. Why should the foot be the lowest and the head the highest limb of the body? Does it not show the injustice of the Dispenser? Let wise men answer this question for themselves.

But it is not for harmony that different creatures have been differently placed. Harmony is a means and not an end. The end is culture, the actualization of the potentialities of different individuals. The differently sized fingers are meant to make the harmonious working of the body possible, and

this harmony is a means of cultivating certain powers of the soul which is the owner of the fingers. The fingers function not as isolated individuals, but as instruments whereby the soul works. Now different souls are at different stages of the journey of evolution. They cannot be treated alike. The most striking feature which distinguishes the Vedic Culture from other cultures is that while the Vedic Culture takes note of the tiniest creature and provides it with the material to aid evolution, other cultures lose sight of a vast number of creatures which inhabit this universe. They start with man, not even all men, but a certain fancied type whose evolution and development they keep in view, letting all others go to wall. "Man", it is said, "is the lord of the creation, the most excellent that is found on the earth." Well and good. Let it be so. But is he the only creature ? Is the whole creation meant for him and him alone and he for none else ?

It is a terribly important question. Man is so vain that he shudders at the very idea of examining the question. "Who dares ask me this question ? I am the lord of the universe because no body can compel me to think otherwise." This is, I say , lion-like , brutish. Lions do not love logic. They know no reasoning except that which

their paws and fangs provide. But this does not make lions civilized or cultured. A cultured man ought to think otherwise. He should find out the reality. Let alone the universe. Think but of this earth. How expansive ! And how much of it meant for man. Three fourths of the globe is not habitable for man. The remaining one fourth is not all his. How can, then, all this earth and millions of times bigger universe be meant altogether for him? An infinite variety of living beings, of different shapes and different natures are found here. They all have existences of their own. They are all nature's children, created by it, as much as man is. The lordship of man may be true if it means the capacity to realise his limitations and the rights of others. If there is a man who thinks that he alone exists and none else and that the world is meant only to be subservient to his ends, it is his folly, if not madness; and he is sure to be dis-illusioned in near future. The past history of individuals and groups or classes of individuals, who thought in this strain, testifies to this fact. They are nowhere. A little jerk was sufficient to upset them.

Therefore, the first truth which culture should take notice of, is that all men are not equal, nor all creatures. They are at different levels of evo-

lution and need different treatment' in order to advance further. Nature does take notice of it and does treat them differently. A cultured society also should follow suit.

But, the reader may ask, do you not hereby accentuate differences and encourage discord ? We say , no, certainly not. It is rather the wrong theory of equality that intoxicates the mind of the masses and actuates them to struggle for equality which they have never been successful to achieve, nor they are likely to do in future. If God had made all men equal, there was nothing in the world to disturb or modify their equality.

But one thing should be remembered. We do not mean to underrate the struggle which has some times been made to do away with inequality. The absence of equality does not mean all kinds of inequalities. There are certain inequalities which are valid and should remain. There are other inequalities which are fancied and must go. Valid inequalities lead to harmony. Invalid ones lead to discord. It is invalid inequalities that need to be opposed. To resort again to the analogy of five fingers. They are unequal. True. It is only because they are unequal that they are harmonious. Exactly equal fingers would not do. But the inequality which leads to harmony is only of



one fixed type. Other types are detrimental to harmony. The thumb may be too big; or one of other fingers too small. Similarly, inequality among the members of a society may be of a wrong type and may lead to its disruption. While nature has made different things differently, it has taken care to adjust their differences so well that the blending has produced most desirable effect. Take an orange. Analyse its elements. Sugar, salt, acid etc. They are all different, but they are mixed in such a proper proportion that the fruit tastes sweet. A little more sweetness, or a little more sourness would have made the fruit distasteful. The difference there is, but it is of due proportions. The same holds good in case of living creatures. They are on different levels. But those levels are determined. They should be taken a due notice of, in order to help their development. Undue differences will lead to failure.

Instead of borrowing illustrations from the outside world, let us take concrete examples of the society itself.

To begin with sex distinctions. No sane man will say that sex distinctions are imaginary and unreal, or that man and woman mean the same. Not only physical features, but inner capacities

and inclinations differ. Why should woman be at par with man, wife with husband, sister with brother, mother with father? Sex-inequality has been a constant problem for social reformers. There was hardly any period of human history when this question did not arise in more or less acute form. Emancipation of woman from the thralldom of man is as tense a problem today as it was before. But the fact is that not only woman is different from man, one woman is also different from another woman. The queen is not only different from the king. She is different from her maid-servant too. The maid-servant complains that qua woman, she should be on the same level with the queen. The queen complains that qua human being, she should be on the same level with the king. But no social reform has been able to annihilate this difference. What is practical is only this. The real difference will remain. There is no power on earth, that might do away with this. But conventional differences must go. For instance, why should woman be kept in *purdah* and man be free to enjoy the breeze? As far as respiratory organs are concerned, man and woman are on the same footing. They need same kind of air. Similarly, why should the maid-servant be deprived of the minimum amenities of life? She is

after all a woman. There are scores of conventional differences which ignorance and vanity have provided. They must go. This is what we practically mean when we lay emphasis on equality of all human beings. The culture problem should deal with the due proportion of inequality and not with perfect equality. Different persons in society have different rights and different duties. The society should first deal with duties. Then rights should be determined according to duties. In the administration of a government, duties of post are fixed at first and then the pay of the post. The salary is the price of the work which is to be performed. Work is the chief thing. Pay follows work.

False inequality must go, because it leads to injustice, discontent and discord. But false emphasis on equality must also go, as this too leads to injustice, discontent and discord. It is unnatural. It does no good. It can do evil. The present age is significant of this truth. All persons want same rights, same kind of provision, same kind of clothes and lodging, same level of comforts. But not same duties. The motto is eat as much as you wish; and do as much as you can. The former is a demand from the individual. The latter is a demand

from the society. The two demands do not go together. There are different angles of vision. The result is breach of peace. Why ? Because the foundation of the society is being laid on the wrong basis of equality. It is easier to see how much you wish to eat. It is difficult to find how much you can work. The capacity to eat is on the surface. The capacity to work is invisible and cannot be known unless you are sincere. Therefore it is that the most efficiently working society should determine the norms of right and duties both. The well-being of the society depends upon the accuracy of this determination. Justice means this. Not the equal division of enjoyables. A culture that does not take a due notice of this fact, must fail in the end, however glittering in other respects. Vedic culture does take cognisance of this point. The main props of this culture are what we call in Sanskrita *Varna-Ashrama-dharma* or the duties of four classes of the society interwoven with those of the four stages of an individual life. We propose to deal with this subject later on. For the present, let us point out that Varnas and Ashramas are not two water-tight compartments, one having nothing to do with the other. The Varna System and the Ashrama System are blended together like warp and woof. They are

based upon the fact that different beings have different potentialities and their actualization and evolution need different treatment. The whole thing looks complex at the outset and has been too often misrepresented. But we must remember that life itself is a complex thing. Nothing simple can help us in achieving the end in view. Had it been a case of only mankind or of only a small section of humanity, perhaps a simpler form might have been sufficient. There are some systems of culture which arise from the idea that man's interests are the only interests that we need take notice of. The two great Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato only took notice of the Hellenes or Greeks; the Serfs were altogether ignored. As regards lower-animals, in most of the systems, they are considered only as inanimate beings, the word animal being used as an analogy. They are meant to serve the ends of man, having no end of their own. They do not stand for themselves. God did not make them for themselves. Their end lies in their utility in the interests of man. But the Vedic culture extends the benefits of culture to all living beings, the only difference being that while man understands others, animals do not. This increases the responsibilities of man. He must cater not only for himself, but for others.

He is the lord of the creation in the sense that he has to feed so many other mouths too. He is the father of the society of all beings. In a large family, there are parents who cook for themselves and for their children. Then there are children who eat but do not cook. Why? Because their consciousness has not so much developed. Thus the parents have two-fold duties, duties to develop their own selves and the duties to arrange for the development of the children. The parents hold their high position only because of this consciousness of their extensive duties. Children are children only because of their incapacity to think of themselves or others. The same analogy must extend further. Lower animals are on the baby level, lacking in the consciousness of either their needs or of others. Man is the custodian of culture. He should serve as the gardener of the whole universe, not only growing, but making others grow. And nature has so arranged that man's growth remains hampered if he does not care for others' growth. In the words of the Yajur Veda "May I look upon all beings with a friend's eye".\* (Mitrasyaham chakshusha sarvani bhutani samikshe). It means that man, a cultured man, ought to be

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\*मित्रस्याहं चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षे ।

(यजु० ३६।१८)

a friend to all living beings and the measure of his culturedness is the love that he bears towards others. You cannot think of a higher ideal. If you cannot reach this ideal, even when you strive for it, it simply means that all ideals are unapproachable to the cent per cent. degree. In order to be ideally cultured you ought to reach this ideal, or at least should try your best to achieve as much as is possible under the circumstances. If you strive and fail, it is one thing. If you have no faith in the ideal and act contrary to it, it is quite another thing. An ideal if not approachable has the quality of appearing to be approachable. It at least determines the road along which you have to go. Those who poohpooh the ideal are apt to take to an adverse path and go down and down in the scale of civilization. Those who respect the ideal and leave no stone unturned in its achievement are on the right path and advance further and further as the life advances. If you cannot reach the summit of the ideal, never mind. Your eye must be thereon, in order that your foot is on the right path. If the ideal appears to be receding further and further and its non-approachableness annoys you, do not feel bored. Remember that the unapproachable ideal is not like a misleading 'will o' the wisp' entrapping you into a

mire. It is the shining star that helps you on and on and makes your life brighter and brighter. If you falter in the way and sit on the road side, disgusted and disappointed, stake off this disgust and rise again, keeping your eye at the beacon light and rest assured that your labours will be fully repaid. There are some who in disgust turn their face backward and begin to act contrarily. They have been the founders or promulgators of different civilizations—civilizations which are not entitled to be called cultures; they have not helped the growth, but have hampered it. They are just opposite to culture. They have only succeeded in making man brute and brute still more brutish. They kill the very germ which they were meant to help to grow. The Vedic culture has this superiority over other cultures. It does not hamper. It helps to grow.



## CHAPTER V

### THE SPIRIT

Just look at a garden. It consists of so many things big and small, the gardener, that manager, the field, the soil, the manure, the drains, the fountain of water, a number of implements. But which, do you think, is the most important? Perhaps you call the question too vague. Everything is important from its own stand point. If you happen to belong to the firm that makes spades, you will call the spade the most important of all, as your interest lies in it. You deal in spades. If you are the supervisor of the canal from which the garden is irrigated, you will call 'water' the most important. So on and so forth. But water and spade both are mere auxiliaries as far as the garden is concerned. The main thing is the seed that grows and for whose growth alone, other things are meant.

Similarly, culture consists of many things, all important in their own way, but one, the most important. What that is, is to be ascertained, as without this, there is a good deal of going stray.

This question has been most beautifully dealt with in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, one of the most important works on the Vedic literature.' It is in the form of a dialogue between a sage who is on the eve of his renouncement of the world and his shrewd wife who was to remain at home.

The sage Yajnavalkya calls his beloved wife Maitreyi and acquaints her with his resolution to renounce the world next day, promising to leave all his belongings to her.

She asks, "My beloved master, if the whole world full of its wealth, comes into my possession, shall I attain immortality?"

"No," replies the sage, "Certainly not. You will live only as easy a life as most people do, who indulge in auxiliaries. The real goal of life you cannot attain from worldly possessions."

"Then, Sir", retorts the wife, "what shall I do with the things which do not help in making me immortal? Tell me that which you know to be the best?"

"Very dear indeed art thou who talkest such sweet things," said the husband. "I will unravel to thee the whole mystery. Hearken and ponder over it."

Now begins the lecture :—

“The wife loves the husband, not for husband’s sake but for the sake of her own *self*.

“The husband loves his wife, not for the wife’s sake; but for the sake of his own *self*.

“Children are dear to parents not for the sake of the children but for the sake of their own *selves*.

“Wealth is dear not for wealth’s sake, but for the *self*’s sake.

“The preceptor is dear, not for the preceptor’s sake, but for the *self*’s sake.

“The soldier is dear not for the soldier’s sake, but for the *self*’s sake.

“The people are dear not for the people’s sake but for the *self*’s sake.

“The shining ones are dear not for the shining ones’ sake but for the *self*’s sake.

“The creatures are dear not for those creatures’ sake, but for the *self*’s sake.

“All things are dear not for the sake of those things, but for the sake of the *self*.

“This *self*, is, then, to be seen, heard, felt and contemplated. O dear, Maitreyi it is by seeing the *self* that everything is seen, it is by hearing the *self* that everything is heard; it is by feeling the

*self*, that everything is felt; it is by knowing the *self* that everything is known."

It is how the sage Yajnavalkya draws the attention of his wife from all worldly things and persuades her to look inward to her own *self*.

Verily '*self*' is the pivot round which the whole world moves, my husband, my wife, my son, my father, my friends, my property, my wealth, nay my world. They all exist as long as my own *self* exists. Bereft of this monosyllable 'my' and its so many implications the world comes to nothing. The great fabric which I wore round this 'my' melts away and vanishes as soon as this 'my' is lost.

Therefore it is that the sage emphasizes, "Thou shouldst know the *self* first, then everything else will be known by itself." (Brihadaronyaka Upanishad, IV. 5. 6)

Superficially read, the passage smacks of selfishness, but it is a philosophical truth which cannot be controverted. It contains a germ, on the realization of which depends the true idea of culture. Selfishness is of much grosser stuff. Selfish is the man who forgets his self and is immersed in the ocean of non-self interests. The philosophy of non-attachment which makes the context of the above passage is based upon the discernment of the *self* from the non-self and the subservience of the latter

upon the former. All that is selfish vanquishes the *self* and puts it into the bondage of non-self. Selfishness does not mean the supremacy of the self. It means its enslavement. A selfishman does not serve his *self*. It serves what is non-self. It makes the *self* the slave of what is non-self. He who realizes his *self* rises above worldly concerns. He alone can attain immortality. A full fledged cultured man must shun what is base, lest his *self* might be thereby soiled. He who would keep his clothes clean must shun the dust. He who would keep his *self* clean must shun the base sentiments which besmirch the soul with selfishness. "It is the *self* which must be understood", says the sage Yajnavalkya.

Then, what is culturedness and what is not culturedness depends upon this crucial test. Refer in all cases to the *self*, as in all cases in the garden we refer to our seed. What is good is that which helps the seed. All that is unhelpful is bad.

Referring to this spirit, a verse in the YajurVeda says, "Thou art the measure of all. Thou art the criterion of all." (Yajur Veda XV. 65)\*.

(Sahasrasya pramaasi, Sahasrasya pratimaasi.)

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\*सहस्रस्य प्रमासि सहस्रस्य प्रतिमासि ।  
(यजुर्वेद १५।६५)

Here “thou” means ‘*self*’. It is the ‘*self*’ where-with we measure all our successes and failures. It is the *self* which determines our all interests of life. It is the *self* which decides our relationship with the outer world and other beings. He who refers to his *self* in all actions and pursuits is never deceived. He who chooses otherwise is sure to fail. Therefore should all of us pay special heed to the saying of the sage Yajnavalkya, “It is the *self* which is to be seen, heard, thought and contemplated.”

Why should the *self* be our highest authority? The answer has been beautifully given in another treatise of the Vedic literature, called Katha Upanisad. “Know thyself as the master of the chariot, thy body as the chariot; thy intellect as the driver, thy mind as the reins, thy senses as the horses, the worldly sensations as the road along which these horses are to go. The enjoyer is the spirit, conjoined with its body, senses and the mind.\*” It is the master of the chariot, for whom the chariot, the

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\*आत्मानं रयिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव च ।

बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥

इन्द्रियाणि हयान्याहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् ।

आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः ॥

(कठोपनिषद् १।३।३,४)

horses and everything else are meant. The efficiency of the chariot depends upon the good that they do to the master of the chariot. The master is the end and the chariot the means. The chariot is good not because it is so strong or beautiful, but because it serves the end of the master. Similarly, the efficiency of everything depends upon its capacity to help the spirit's evolution. We can say with Maitreyi, "what shall I do with a thing that does not help me in attaining immortality."

And what does the immortality of the spirit mean? If the spirit is immortal, it is meaningless to seek for a thing which is already there? If the spirit is mortal, how can you make a thing immortal, when by nature it is mortal? Does, then, Maitreyi deal in conundrums? No. Man is mortal as long as he refers his activities to his mortal body. An ordinary man forgets that he is anything but the body. The needs of his body are his needs. The satisfaction of his body is his satisfaction. He lives for his body and as this body is perishable, the constant fear of perishableness clings to him. It is this illusion from which the spirit is to be freed. It has to distinguish itself from the body with which it has identified itself. 'I shall die' means that my body will die. Well, die it must, but the main point to be seen how can I

die when my body dies? Yajnavalkya when desiring to renounce the world realized this point and his wife Maitreyi, when rejecting the wordly belongings of her husband understood how to distinguish the real interests of her spirit from those of the perishable body.

In deciding the nature of cultures, this point is of the utmost importance. What shall we do with a culture which takes no cognizance of this fact ? A ship owning company pays more attention to the ship than to the passengers for whom it is meant to cater. For it, the ship is everything. But pray, what is the ship for, if there exist no passengers ? The ship is meant for the passengers and not vice versa. It is folly to ignore them. But it is they who are the least cared for. In the present day economic world wherein myriads of departments are open to engage the time and attention of man, I think it is the man who is the most lost sight of. Millions of machines are working, producing different kinds and types of material, all apparently meant to be consumed by man. But man is receding from the front view, from stage to stage, till he is totally invisible. In this mechanistic civilization machines are every thing, man is nothing. More the products, more the hunger. Why ? Because man's attention is diver-



ted to that part of man which is no man. The real man is altogether hidden. We look upon the outer part of man as man. We have no faith in inner man. We do not believe in his existence. We care only for the material aspect of man. The spiritual aspect has been consigned to oblivion. Therefore it is that bread is the centre of all activities. We want bread, nothing but bread. All ethics turns on the pivot of bread. And as in winning our bread we sacrifice ethics, bread is becoming extinct, giving rise to myriads of troubles. Again the same thing. The want of refering to the spirit. The 3rd verse of chapter 40, of the Yajur Veda says :—

“To those dark abodes wherein gloom reigns supreme, repair those, after death, who kill their spirit.\*” Which means that they do not refer to spirit. They ignore it.

In all this din of woe and misery, Yajnavalkya's advice comes ringing into our ears. “It is the spirit that has to be seen, heard, thought and contemplated.” Oh, the voice of Maitreyi:

“What shall I do with a thing that does not lead me to my immortality ?”

\*अमुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसावृताः ।

तांस्ते प्रेत्यापि गच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥

(यजुर्वेद ४०।३)

## CHAPTER VI

### GOD AND CULTURE

Culture which means a system comprising with the growth of spirit is most naturally connected with the existence of God.

It is generally supposed, especially by materialistic minds that God has not, or should not have any place in culture. Laplace is stated to have presented to Napoleon his system of philosophy and when Napoleon asked him why there is no mention of God in it, the scholar politely answered that he did not need God to explain his philosophy. This in other words meant that in explaining the Universe God's existence plays no part whatsoever. If God is indeed such a negligible factor, then our culture should be based upon something which is absolutely non-spiritual. We have shown in the foregoing chapter that in a spirit-less inanimate world, culture is altogether out of question. A stone grows, but it has no end in view. It does not feel that it grows. It has no purpose in its growth, unless somebody else, or something else, may find in the growth of the stone the realisation of his own end. A wall made of bricks may grow

to any length, any breadth, any thickness, or to any shape without making the bricks feel that the wall is properly being made. It is always with reference to the master of the house that the propriety or impropriety of the making of the wall is determined. It is animate beings who decide what length, what shape or what qualities are required for a wall to be a good wall. Ugly or beautiful is to be decided by the eye that sees. Similarly, culture if it is a combination of certain blind movements only and no more, will be no culture at all, nor there can arise a question of a culture being noble or ignoble.

Adaptation to a certain fixed end is said to be the subject of all evolution. But our present day evolutionists do not clearly say what that end means or what is the criterion of determining that end. Let us take an every-day analogy. There is a big kitchen in which food is being cooked, bread, curry etc. What is the criterion of a good food? Well-cooked, half-cooked, over cooked. Tasteful, stale, distasteful. Invigorating, not nourishing, unwholesome. How will you answer these questions? If there is only food and no eater, how will you be able to decide? What will be your crucial test? It is always the eater who is referred to. The quality of the food depends upon the quality,

capacity and requirement of the eater. Similarly excellence or any degree of excellence of a culture is to be determined by the nature, growth and requirements of the spirits which are non-material and for which material things are necessary.

And when you transgress the limits of matter, and step into the non-material or spiritual world, you are confronted with several non-material problems. Can you escape them ? Perhaps you say, you can. You hold that whatever we call non-material or spiritual is also material. Certain materialistic philosophers (e.g. Hume) have tried to explain every animal activity as a form of matter. Hume, for instance, says that whenever he tries to think of himself, he tumbles upon something material, pain, pleasure, hunger, thirst, or the like, all of which are connected with matter. But how funny is it that through all this tumbling over matter, he cannot shake off his own self that tumbles. Pain, pleasure, hunger and thirst are not the presence or absence of certain objects. My basket does not feel hungry when it has no bread in it. My jug does not feel thirsty when there is no water in it. The leg of my chair feels no pain when I break it. The fracture of a bone causes no pain when it is not connected with some pain-feeling entity. A number of beautiful treatises

which Hume has written in the support of his materialistic theories would not have been possible if he were always to tumble upon something material. One very great thing, which he seems to have missed is that he had to challenge his adversaries. This challenging spirit which says, "You are wrong, I am right. I can forward a number of arguments in my favour," this very spirit goes much beyond the materialistic sphere and lands us on a region which is altogether non-materialistic. What would this philosophy or that philosophy mean, what would distinguish between good or bad, right or wrong, truth or untruth, if it is all dead and inert matter? Therefore, I say that it is '*atman*' or 'spirit' that has to be thought of when we decide the question of culture.

I said above that as soon as you enter the sphere of spirits, you cannot afford ignoring God. It must be a very funny philosophy indeed which believes in spirits or non-material selves and leaves God.

The Vedic culture is out and out theistic. The Rg. Veda opens with a verse which is significantly illuminating.

Agni midhe puro-hitam, Yajnasya deva-  
martywjam. Hotaram ratna dhatamam.

(Rg. Veda I-1.1)

The literal translation will, roughly speaking, be as follows:—

I adore the adorable prime-mover, the foremost placed of all things, the governor of all actions, the producer of all seasons, the caller to action of all creatures, and the supporter of all serms. The word '*Agni*' has generally been translated as 'fire'. Some orientalisists made some improvement by replacing 'fire' by 'god of fire'. In a way, it was an improvement, as 'God of fire' is the same as God of the universe. But the real meaning of *Agni*, as shown by its root-meaning, is the adorable prime-mover. (The Sanskrita root *anchu*, means motion and adoration). Mere 'adorable' would mean nothing. There ought to be some quality to qualify a thing for adoration. Being the prime-mover is the quality that entitles God to be the object of worship and adoration. The Rg. Veda being the first book in the library of mankind, and *Agni* being its very first word, it is not improper to infer that *Agni* is perhaps the first word used for God and His Prime-movership is the oldest conception we have of God. A higher conception is not imaginable as prime-movership covers all other attributes. The three well-known attributes of creation, maintenance and dissolution of which the later Vedic literature

speaks so elaborately are only three aspects of that one attribute prime-movership. His being the *purohita* (one who occupies the foremost place) is a necessary corollary of His being the prime-mover. The prime-mover must occupy the foremost position. He should be the governor of all activities and all good things should come from Him.

There is another hymn of the Rg. Veda\* which elaborates the same conception (Rg. X. 190). It says that all laws and all events through which those laws come into expression (*Rita* and *Satya*) emanate from the all-intelligent and all-active supreme Being. Ratri or perfect equilibrium is produced by Him and from Him arises the commotion which by disturbing that equilibrium gives rise to the diversity which makes the world world. He is the originator of the Time-conception, because activity is concomitant with Time-conception. He produces Day and Night, the Sun and the Moon and other signs which help us in our time-consciousness.

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\* ऋतं च सत्यं चाभीद्धात् तपसोऽध्वजायत । ततो रात्र्यजायत ततः समूद्रो  
 अर्णवः । १। समुद्रादर्णवादग्निं संवत्सरो अजायत । अहोरात्राणि विदधद्  
 विश्वस्य मिषतो वशी । २। सूर्याचन्द्रमसौ धाता यथापूर्वमकल्पयत् ।  
 दिवं च पृथिवीं चाऽन्तरिक्षं मथो स्वः । ३।

(ऋग्वेदे १०।१६०।१-३)

One very unique feature of this hymn which puts it much above other theistic literature of the world is that it precludes the idea of spasmodic or chance creation. It says and in unequivocal terms that God being eternal, His creation is also cyclically eternal. Had it been a chance creation, it would not have warranted an intelligent creator. They say that history repeats itself. The Veda says that creation repeats itself. (*Dhata yatha purvam akalpayat*, the creator made the creation as before.) It is not God's chance action. It is the very nature of God—eternal nature of eternal God—that creates. The present creation is not an individual event of God's life—unprecedented and never to occur in future. It is but a link in the unending chain of the cycle. In the Vedic literature there are numerous references to "the cycle" of creation. I think very little attention has been paid to this word in theistic circles. We speak of God, His omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence. The devotees of God have given expression to inner feelings by using pedantic and bombastic words in praise of God. He is this. He is that. He can do this. He can do that. But the more we sing of God, the more we make Him a chance God, however strong, however wise and however merciful. He said, "Be it so",



and it was so. But after all, it was a fortuitous action. If God's actions are of a fortuitous nature, however grand, however glorious, they reduce Him to a mere freakful entity and all His grandness cannot help us in evolving our culture. But the Vedas lay stress on the cyclic nature of His creation. They attribute to Him an eternality of laws. And it is this eternality of laws that can determine the course of evolution and lay before the leaders of humanity a definite programme. The future is not an open page before us. We have no power over it. We do not know it. What-ever we infer about it is from the eternal laws, which if fickle and non-eternal, land us in a chaos and vagueness. We do not know whether the sun will rise tomorrow. We do not know whether there will be such a thing as morrow. You may say that the sun rose yesterday. He is rising today. He has been behaving so for generations at least. True, it has. But unless you believe that laws are eternal, how can you guarantee that the same thing will recur tomorrow too. Wait for tomorrow and find out if he is true to the tradition. But waiting vaguely is fatal for your programme. And of what avail is a culture if it does not ensure the certainty of laws ? What a funny world would it be wherein the Maker and the Governor

is freakful ? And if on this ground, you deny the existence of such a Maker and Governor, what is your alternative proposal ? You may deny God if you like. You may expel him out of your mind (of course, it is not open to you to expel Him from the world). But, pray, what will fill the vacancy ? A blind chance—blind of both eyes—blind in the past and blind in the future. Will it help your culture ? You find yourself in a world which has no system, no laws, no certainties. Such scepticism is a very weak reed for any culture to stand upon.

An ordinary individual tries to give dodge to a government authority in order to serve his immediate interests. He thinks that thereby he fulfils his purpose. He does not care to calculate that this act of his disturbs the whole governmental machinery and exposes him also to untold future miseries. You will call such delinquents short-sighted, because by seeking a momentary gain they court an evil of much more duration. The same analogy holds in case of those persons who think that a certain aspect of their culture remains undisturbed or even improves by ignoring the divine agency. Some persons believe that the cause of culture is much hampered by religious-mindedness of people. "Religion is an opium which

intoxicates its users.”—This is a general cry. Some materialistic teachers began this slogan and foolish people took it up without understanding its implications. No doubt it is true that religious-mindedness can also be misguided. Poison may be taken as food by mistake and it will naturally lead to death. But nobody, on this account, would advise the abolition of food department. If the food given is un-wholesome, less nutritious or harmful, change it, give it up, or improve it. But you cannot go without food. Good food must take the place of the bad food. Similarly, if religious beliefs have, for selfish ends, been tampered with or adulterated and if wrong conception of spirituality has led to harmful consequences, we should try to cure these evils. Better stuff should be provided in place of the worse one. But remember that materialism can lead to much greater evils than even misguided spirituality. This can be easily seen by studying closely the history of origin, growth and progress of evils either individualistic or social. First of all the very idea of right and wrong arises from the spiritual conception of *self*. If *self* is nothing more than a composition of material elements, what is evil? Mere reference to one’s individualistic pleasure would not do. One has to check oneself for avoiding

evil or doing good. Even materialistic philosophies are compelled to recommend self-restraint. This self-restraint would be absolutely meaningless if there is nothing beyond matter and if the perishing of our bodies means our own annihilation.

Secondly, if you leave aside the case of philosophers or philosophically minded people, even common people have an innate feeling that such an action is good and such bad. They have, so to speak, a sixth sense, moral sense, however crude and undeveloped it may be. When bodily wants compel them to break the rules of morality, they feel a sort of pinching,—compunction you may call it. It is the moral sense which naturally helps them in determining their do's and don't's. This sense does not arise from the material elements of which our material being is made. Its fountain head is the spiritual self. Whenever this moral sense is subdued, suppressed or atrophied, the society meets a very terrible quake. All social upheavals are the results of the suppression of this moral sense. In ordinary circumstances even a back-ward society has some moral sense which keeps its equilibrium in tact, and prevents individual criminalities from assuming huge proportions. But when masses lose this sense, for any

reason what-so-ever, many tragic events follow. I say "Tragic", because I spontaneously have a spiritual feeling. If I lose this feeling altogether and come to look upon myself or others as only lumps of inert matter, I cannot use the word 'tragic' also; for a lump of stone or earth, there is nothing tragic.

Now a cultured people should have their this sense fully developed. They should know what is conducive to their own growth and what to that of others which make their society. Societies, states and governments all should be and are based upon this sense. All makers of these societies or governments work on the strength of this sense. It is this sense to which they constantly appeal, whether consciously or unconsciously. If they are conscious, the results are better. If they are unconscious, the results are slow. And if they are stubborn opponents of this sense and go the length of denying it, they bring disaster to themselves and their society. All social constitutions are based upon the principle "Respect Life". If people do not respect life, there is wholesale destruction. Whatever and whenever life-disrespecting forces have been let loose, most unbearable conditions have been produced. Therefore, it is that the nature of life has to be enquired into.

Life is not a mere conjunction of matter. Nor it is a merely organised matter, even though the word "organized" has spiritual life inherent in it. A Rg. Vedic verse says, "O great God, I did not know the nature of my own-self and therefore I sinned\*." (Rg. Vida VII, 89.3)

All sins arise from the ignorance of the nature of our self and the only road to virtue is the development of the conscibusness of this nature. Our devotion to God helps this development, as this creates in us the respect for the law of the government of the Universe. We begin, by devotion to God, to look upon our self as a part of the Big Whole of which God is the governor. We begin to feel that our welfare is a part of the cosmic welfare. The most cultured man is he who has this cosmic sense and the most cultured society that in which general masses have this sense developed. Aberrations and exceptions do occur. But they are mere exceptions, tolerable exceptions, which though forgiven are still undesirable.

But one point still remains to be cleared. How is Vedic culture influenced by Vedic conception of God ? And how will differently conceived God

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\* ऋक्: समह दीनता प्रतीपं जगमा शृचे । मृडा सुक्षत्र मृडय ॥

lead to different results ? If God is the governor of the whole universe, and if there is only one such governor, without a second, then how is it that his work should depend upon the conception which lower selves have about Himself ? Shall I change my behaviour because different people look upon me differently ? The answer to this question is simple enough. The culture of a society depend upon the efforts of the individuals of which the society is made. Every culture has 'man' as its chief factor. We are not passive pots in the hands of our Great Potter. We are sentient beings. Our will is free to make or mar our future. We have to set up a programme and work up to it. Take the analogy of a government. There is a governing agency, of whatever form. Then there are governed people. The aim of the government is not the development of the governing agency but that of the governed people. Now these people are sentient beings—not blocks of stones. They put forth some efforts to bring the government to success. They have to contribute their own share. Now this contribution depends upon the conception which these individuals have of their government. In every government there are loyal, half-loyal, un-willingly royal, feignedly loyal, disloyal and rebellious elements.

Now the success of the government depends upon the majority or higher proportion of the elements enumerated above in their respective order, and the degree of their loyalty depends upon the conception they have formed of the nature, capacity and strength of the government. If they think that the government is tyrannical or self-centred, they will be either slavish or rebellious. If they think that the Government is weak and imbecile, they would be tempted to over-power it. If they think that it is efficient, benevolent and considerate, they would be loyal to it and will co-operate with it. Similarly, if God is regarded as a big despot whose will is law and who does whatever He likes, then the devotees become flattering, unprincipled, bigotted, and superstitious. Their forms of worship consist of un-warranted panygerics. They are hard upon those who do not subscribe to their way of thinking. They hurl curses upon their adversaries, kill or persecute non-believers, indulge in horrible ceremonies to propitiate their God. Most of the religious persecutions and religious wars are due to this conception of the Deity. Animal or human sacrifices made to please the God are generally found among such people. All the evils that are possible in the court of a despot are found among the devo-



tees of such a God. And just as in an ill-administered self-centred state, black-marketing is very rampant, so is the case in a society which has faith on such a despotic maker of the universe. Bribe and not real service to the state is the order of an ill-managed government. Similarly bribes to imaginary gods, or goddesses, or their so-called prophets, agents or vicegerents is the order of an ill-conceived religion. Propitiatory rites take the place of ethical virtues. The Vedic conception of God is that of a selfless law-giver. He rules over the world, not at all for his own sake. Even the best human ruler has at least some share of interests in the Government. If not material, at least spiritual. An ideally good king may say to himself, "If I shall rule over my subjects, most selfless God will reward me for this virtuous deed." But God has not even so much interest. His interest lies cent per cent. in the ruled and not in Himself. In the Rg. Veda we come across a verse which describes this idea in an analogical form:—\*(Rg. Veda. I. 164, 20) "There are two beautiful friend-birds sitting over the same tree. One of them eats its fruit and the other oversees (manages) the whole affair."

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\* द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते । नयोरन्यः  
पिप्लवं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥ (ऋ० १।१६४।२०)

The idea is that in this body of ours there are two distinct living entities God and the soul. God is the governor while the soul is the enjoyer of the fruit. A little thinking makes the analogy quite clear. God is as present in my body as my ownself. But the body, though made by God is exclusively for my benefit. God is the maker of my eye. But he has no interests what-so-ever in the eye. He is cent per cent. aloof. But I am the user of the eye. I enjoy the benefit of sight. So on and so forth.

The Mundaka Upanishat has added two more verses to the above as explanatory. It says \**“The soul, though residing on the same tree is so absorbed in the affairs of the tree that it altogether forgets the other bird, i.e., God. Therefore, it suffers pain, due to the over attachment of the body. But as soon as it descries the Master (God), it realizes His glory and is free from pain.”*

*“As soon as the seer sees the shining and all intelligent creator and pervader of the body, he*

\*समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽ नीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः । जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीशमस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ॥२॥

यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णं कर्त्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।

तदा विद्वान् पुण्यपापे विधूय निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यमपैति ॥३॥

(मुण्डकोपनिषत्, ३-१)

washes himself of the dual nature of sin and virtue and being free from all blemishes attains to the spiritual equilibrium (i.e. salvation)."

The idea is that the realization of God sharpens the moral sense of the soul. All evil thoughts haunt a mind only so long as one is blind to the presence of God in the body.

A well organized society depends upon the mutual regard of its members for one another. This regard again depends upon the consciousness that other selves are as good entities as we are. They are our kith and kin. This you may call spiritual fraternity. Men born of the same mother are brothers because they have bodily fraternity. This fraternity gets thinner and thinner as there is a distance in pedigree. It is why fraternity based solely upon parentage and birth does not produce a culture of high order. Even the cubs of a lion or wolf are friendly in their early age. Barbarians love their brethren. It is not a mark of good culture to love one's own men and hate others. Sectarianism, communalism, racialism all spring up from the sense of physical fraternity. Spiritual fraternity is of a decidedly finer stuff. A verse of the

Yajur Veda says, (Chapter XL, Verse 5)\*:—

“He who sees all beings in the same God and God in all beings does not come to pain.”

God is the Highest Spirit—the Spirit which links one spirit with another. This spiritual fraternity is the basis of a culture of the highest order. “Father, we are all thy children. The best way of pleasing thee is to love our brethren.”

Then again § “He who sees all beings as centred in the same God, is free from all pain, all miseries and all attachments, because all is one for him. He is at-one-ment with all.” (Yajur Veda XL. 6).

One more peculiarity of the Vedic theism is that every soul is in direct communion with God. There is no intermediary between me and my maker—no mediator, no agent, no messenger. When God is in my heart, He is nearer me than

\*यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्नेवानुपश्यति । सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विचिकित्सति ॥

(यजुर्वेद ४०।५)

§यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्वाभूद् विजानतः । तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनु पश्यतः ॥

(यजुर्वेद ४०।६)

any body else. "Thou art ours and we are thine\*" (Tvam asmakam, Tava Smasi-Rg. Veda VIII-92.32)

"He is far, He is near He is within us, He is without us. §" (Yajur Veda XL. 7)

One more point and we have done. You may, perhaps, ask what is the position of a sage or a great teacher in the society of a well-cultured population according to the Vedas. Is he not superior to others as he guides or teaches ? Yes, he is. We admit. All teachers are superior to the disciples. But their superiority does not entitle them to be the agents or representatives of their disciples in the court of God. They point to the way. They lift the veil of ignorance which hangs between a man and his maker. But they do not mediate. Therefore, it is that in pure Vedic days, no teacher or sage was worshipped along with God. The sage himself was a devotee of the same God, showing by his example, how others should worship, claiming no part of the worship for himself. When teachers came to claim for themselves

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\*त्वमस्माकं तव स्मसि ।

(ऋग्वेद ८।१२।३२)

§तदेजति तन्नजति नदूरे तद्वन्तिके । तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदुसर्वस्यास्य वाञ्छतः ॥

(यजुर्वेद ४०।७)

the title of God's agent or mediator, people began to worship them as God's vicegerent, thus attributing to God all the weaknesses of a human monarch of limited knowledge and limited capacity. They forget a very simple thing, that when God is in my heart, where is the need of my seeking another agent or mediator ? Man's culture has suffered a good deal at the hands of such superstitions. People have arranged themselves under the banners of different teachers, giving rise to numerous types of jealousies and animosities. They say that they belong to different classes because their teachers are different. They forget that God is one and therefore they are one. Much of the bitterness which we find in religious circles is due not to God or His worship but to the mediators, prophets, agents, priests and the like who pretend to have monopolized the benefits of spirituality for themselves or for their followers.

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## CHAPTER VII

### INDIVIDUAL GROWTH AND SOCIETY

“Walk together, speak together and let your minds co-operate in the acquisition of knowledge.\*”

(Rg. Veda X-191.2)

This verse emphasizes the necessity of working together, i.e., in societies. Man is said to be a gregarious animal. There are other animals too which are as gregarious. But living in group and forming a society are two different things. Man is the only animal who is social. Of the three things given above, the first two are symbolical while the third is fundamental. Co-operation of minds is the chief factor in the organisation of a society. Ten thousand persons herded together make a crowd but not a society. Ten or twelve persons who think together and organise do form a society.

The question is, when culture means the fullest growth of the seed-powers or potentialities of the soul, where is the necessity of society and all

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\*सङ्गच्छन् संवदन् सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।

(ऋग्वेद १०।१९।२)

that pertains to society. This is easy to see. The potentialities of an individual self are such as are incapable of development without the help of other selves. The germination and growth of a seed depends upon manure, water, air, heat etc. It may not need the help of other seeds. But a self left alone though in best material environments will remain undeveloped. Suppose a man is left alone in an island where there is no scarcity of food, water, air, or other physical requirements. His body must grow. But does his soul too grow ? Ask a man who is given a solitary confinement and he will tell you what loneliness means. Inner spiritual development needs contact with other spirits, and as this contact is possible only through bodies, social organisation involves so many physical things. In order to think together we need language which depends for its existence upon our mouths. These mouths require other things, so on and so forth. In this way spiritual contact needs material contact. But without spiritual contact, spiritual evolution of individual spirits is not at all possible. Bodily development involves assimilation of outer-matter. But spiritual development means the invisible and intangible influence which one spirit exerts over another in refining its inner qualities.



Endurance, self-control, love, pleasure etc. are the qualities which need development. They cannot be developed singly.

Social organization is, therefore, a main factor in building up a culture. The Vedic culture has an elaborate social programme of which we shall speak later. Here we wish to emphasize only one thing, i.e., the place of the individual in the society. The question has often been raised whether individual interests are to be sacrificed for the interests of the society or vice versa. This is rather a ticklish question and has often led the discussion to an undesirable extreme. In a well developed society, the interests of the individual should not differ from the interests of the society. Why should they ? The society is nothing apart from the individuals that go to make it. But sometimes we take a narrow view of the point. It is due to diseased mentality. A well organised society should take care of every type of interests belonging to any individual. For every individual and his or her every legitimate interest ought to be sacred. This can be possible only if every individual thinks it not only his right but also his duty. He takes care of others' interests as much as his. A healthy body means a body whose every limb is healthy. If I am suffering

from headache, it is not only my head that is diseased but the whole body suffers. And if this headache is due to any fault on the part of my hand or some other limb, it shows that there is something wrong somewhere in my constitution; otherwise how is it that my hand lost the sense of being a part of the body and hurt my head. The very fact that my hand could hurt my head proves beyond doubt that the connection between the hand and the head which makes them the co-limbs of the same body has some how been tempered with. To what extent an individual feels the necessity of safe-guarding his own interests at the expense of the interests of the society, to that extent the social physique ought to be considered diseased. And the individual thus behaving is also a sufferer. How can he remain immune if the body to which he belongs is not immune ? His self-immunity even if secured is meaningless. It first harms the body politic and immediately after, his own self. Again take the same analogy. Suppose a tooth aches but does not want to be extricated. Its aching and still remaining in the body are two impossible things. Either it should cease aching and begin co-operating with the body or should go. If it is so strong that the body cannot expel it from out of itself, the body

will suffer 'no doubt. But soon after the tooth will also suffer. How can a tooth in a dead body remain as tooth ? It must rot. It must perish. A tooth is a tooth as long as it receives proper nourishment and co-operation from the other parts of the body in return, of course, of its own contribution of service. There is reciprocity. You can say that such ideal societies do not exist. True. —But such ideal bodily health is not found. Still people keep their health in tact for all practical purposes. There is a limit of workable physical health. Similarly, there is a limit of workable social health. Diseases do exist in a body, but as long as they are in a negligible quantity, we can say the body is healthy. There is a limit after which we have to officially declare that a man is ill. Similarly social diseases in the form of individual selfishness or weaknesses may remain in existence in negligible quantity long before a society is officially declared to be bad and worth revolution. But we should not lose sight of the ideal. Our eye on the ideal is the only means of checking the disease. The ideal pulls you towards itself. It keeps you in its practical proximity. It is folly to lose sight of the ideal simply because you have no hope to reach the ideal. The ideal will always remain ideal. But it

does not, thereby, lose its practical value. This value is mostly spiritual, though through material medium. Keeping the ideal in view is a spiritual process. The nearer the ideal, the more is the spiritual advancement. It is fighting against matter. It is triumph of the spirit over the body.

Religious minded people may probably ask: What is the value of renunciation when society is so indispensably necessary for spiritual advancement ?

This question has often been misunderstood. Some people think that nobody can gain spiritually unless he renounces the world. But if this be true, what is the justification for the existence of the material world ? Remember that the goal of life can never be material. Even the most materialistic Epicurean should admit it. You want wealth not for wealth's sake; but for those things which wealth can buy. You want those things, food, clothes etc., not for those very things, but because they keep the body in tact. And you want a healthy body, not for the body's sake, but for your own sake. So ultimately the question turns upon yourself. Remember what Yajnavalkya said to Maitreyi.

But if material well-being is so very necessary for spiritual advancement, what is the value of renunciation ?

This question has been no-where answered so well as in three simple words by the Yajur Veda. (Vide Chapter XL, Verse 1). The Veda says "*tena tyaktena bhunjithah*"\*. (Enjoy it detachedly). These three simple words contain a volume of philosophical truth. First of all, the Veda says "Enjoy" (bhunjithah). Can you help enjoying ? Can you afford to renounce the world ? You can leave your house. But it is only changing one for another better or worse; it is immaterial. You can forsake your family kinship. But you cannot live without any kinship at all. You may leave depending upon others. But only apparently. The direct dependence has gone. An indirect one of an invisible type takes its place. The very society which you boast to have renounced runs after you and pursues you even in the darkest recesses of a forest. It is there; you are still a social being. You have not actually renounced the world.

But there are two ways of enjoying the world; one you may call attachment and the other detach-

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\*तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः । (यजुर्वेद ४०।१)

ment. Attachment is apparently supposed to be enjoyment, but it leads to misery. It is a sweet poison. Detachment is a hard pill to swallow, but leads to happiness. Between these two, i.e., detachment and attachment, are intermediary states. We may illustrate the idea by an analogy. Supposing you are going to a very beautiful place, say, paradise. Paradise has been depicted by those who are well-versed in the art of language, to be an abode, where there is all bliss and no pain. Where it is, we are not concerned with. For the purpose of our analogy, it is quite enough that there is a paradise and you are on your journey towards it. Then again suppose that the road that leads to this paradise is velvet-like smooth and is all along provided with all things that are sweet to you. To walk along such a path is very captivating. You are tempted to make your pace as slow as possible. Everything catches your heart. You are more inclined to stay and enjoy at leisure than to move forward. Are you not at a fix ? Should you linger or should you go on ? If you do the former, you delay your reaching the goal. If you move forward, the parting with such sweet things is heart wrenching. What would you do as a wise man ? Possibly

there is a struggle between your heart that wants to enjoy and your head which wants to calculate the gains and losses. Perhaps you choose to be loyal to your heart and linger. Well, do so and try the experiment. Very soon you will find that the sweetness which caught you is gradually vanishing and the very thing which was so pleasing becomes boring. Just analyse the experience. The thing is there as it was before. But its sweetness is going. Who is taking this sweetness away? What makes the once pleasing thing so boring. Why are you feeling sick of it? There is no fault of the thing. The fault lies in your clinging to it. It was after all a part of your journey. Not the destination. You treated it as if it were the destination. You are allowed to pass on, but not to stay. In the world, you see royal roads where you are allowed to pass and not to tarry. If you tarry, the constable at the post cries, "Pass On". Here too the Divine Dispensation has put an invisible constable in the thing itself. As soon as you think of tarrying, the constable roars "Go On". If you do not hear that inaudible voice, the sweetness which tempted you begins to vanish. God made all these things for your enjoyment, but enjoyment in the journey, not in the destination. The sweetness was to help you in your

onward march and not in your staying: Such is the subtle arrangement that though the thing is there, its sweetness and charm have stealthily vanished. Therefore the Veda says "Enjoy it detachedly," i.e., enjoy it in such a way as if you are in a journeying mood. You enjoy it and then instantaneously leave it. You are in a hurry. You cannot afford to stay. Every portion of the journey is to be passed over. You come in contact with it and then leave it. The contact is momentary, not abiding. It is truly speaking a passing path and not a dwelling house. If you turn your path into a dwelling house and sit there, surely you have transgressed the privileges of a passenger and must suffer for the mistake. The machinery of punishment is so devised that the punishment comes from within and not from without. The enjoyment itself cries. "Thus far and not more". The travellers' love for the road is of a detached nature. He loves the road, but not to dwell there.

This analogy holds good in all cases of worldly enjoyments. Take a lump of sugar and put it in your mouth. It tastes sweet. Keep it in your mouth, say for two hours. You will find that sweetness has gone. Instead of a sweet lump, you find it, first tasteless, and then distasteful. Suppose



some body compels you to keep that sugar in your mouth for a few hours on pain of a few cuts of cain, will you love the sugar as you did in the first instance? Don't you feel its bitterness? The fault is not of sugar. It is yours . You were allowed to enjoy while passing. You have stayed to dwell. In order to examine the truth of this saying , you can take any number of worldly enjoyments from any department of life you like, taste, odour, touch, sight. Take a charming picture and continue staring at it for sometime. Don't you feel that the charms are flying away. God knows where? It is the nature of all charms, You can enjoy them. But do not cling to them. The Veda says "Enjoy them detachedly". The world is full of pleasure for those who enjoy it thus. It is painful to those who enjoy it otherwise. The verse from which we quoted those three words says further, *ma gridhah\**, (Do not cling), Kasya Svit dhanam (whose is this property ?), i.e., not yours alone. But of public. You are allowed to walk in a public park. But if you claim to dwell there, you are turned out. The governor of the park says, "Why do you tarry ? It is not

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\*मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् । (यजुर्वेद ४०।१)

yours, come you can, but not to stay." This world is also a journey. Enjoy it to your fill, but be in a journeying mood. Everything depends upon the mood.

Now those who think they can renounce the world are wrong. They are merely pursuing a will 'o the wisp. Even in forests and under yellow garb can live bodies which are full of darkest passions and blackest desires. But those who by renunciation mean an opportunity to think of themselves and of other selves in a place and under circumstances which are free from the din and bustle of crowd are certainly right. For deep contemplation human minds need a comparative seclusion, freedom from undue interference. This does not mean the quittal of the society; it means the avoidal of a certain bustle which distracts the mind. Then again, renunciation means the enjoyment of the wordly things in a detached manner. This detachment is necessary, as I have constantly emphasized in this chapter, for our forward march. Ever since we are born we need the enjoyment of certain things. But as we grow in life, our objects of enjoyment change. We grow higher and higher in level and we leave our tastes below. What is pleasing to the child of two or three years is quite stale for a boy of six

or seven. He has outgrown it. A youth is tempted to seek other pleasures. And if he indulges in the same pleasures as he used to in his babyhood, we say there is something seriously wrong with the growth of this man; though of twenty or twenty-five he is still a baby, his body grows but not his mind.

Similarly the tastes of youth have also a limit. They must grow stale as one passes from youth to old age. If they persist, it is a sign that the man is not progressing spiritually. It is a psychological fact that when the limbs of the body stop to grow, mental faculties continue their growth. The arms do not grow beyond a limit. But the strength of which the arms are an instrument does grow. Where arms do not reach, the arm of the mind or intellect reaches. Weapons are but mechanised arms, arms made larger by means of intellect. When a man grows in spirit, his bodily activities become weaker and spiritual qualities come into relief. For instance, love soiled by corporeal motives becomes refined, shedding off the alloy and shining in its pure essence. The love which the mother bears for her son or daughter is much finer than the love which the same lady bears for her lover or husband. The latter has a greater amount of material dross

in it. The love which man bears for his neighbour is finer than the love he bears for his own children. The sage who retires to an unfrequented corner of the world in order to discover spiritual truths has not foresaken the world. The separation is but physical. Spiritually he is more concerned with the world. He contacts the spirits. He means to find those truths which are of ultimate good to other selves. He is like a scientist who works in a laboratory to make experiments which will later on be found of immense value for the public. But here too, all depends upon the mood of retiring people. All is not gold that glitters.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is perhaps the first bond that connects civilized people with one another. Every living body needs food for its maintenance and no people can cent per cent, depend upon nature for food. It is good that it is so, otherwise there would have been no impetus for man to rise above wild nature. Inner faculties of man come into play first of all in providing food. And the first art that the man had recourse to must have been agriculture, the method of making earth yield corn. The Vedas, the oldest book in the library of mankind, deal amply with agriculture. In Rg. Veda (IV-26.2) we read:

“I have given the righteous man soil, I have given him rain.”\*

In Rg. Veda (V-53. 13) there is a prayer for agricultural prosperity : -

“Vouchsafe to us the bounty, that which we implore, through which, for child and progeny, Ye

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\*अहं भूमिमददामार्यायाऽहं वृष्टिं दाशुषे मर्त्याय ॥  
(ऋग्वेद ४।२६।२)

give the seed of corn that wasteth not away, and bliss that reacheth to all life. §” (Tr. Griffith)

“The earth bears manifold riches.....herbs .....and vegetations, forests etc.\*” (Rg. Veda III-51.5)

But the earth has to be tilled and corn produced. It is only animals which can live on the natural products of the earth,—grass, bushes etc. Man has been endowed with higher faculties. They must be fully exercised.

Earth and water are two main factors of agriculture. Water comes from rain. It falls on the earth from above. But even in the most certain climates, we cannot totally rely upon rain. There is, therefore, a mention of wells, which throw up their waters in order to quench the thirst of thousands.† (Rg. Veda I-11.69)

“Lay on the yokes, and fasten well the traces: formed is the furrow, sow the seed within it.

§येन तोकाय तनयाय धान्यं बीजं बहुध्वे अक्षितम् ।  
अस्मभ्य तद्धतनं यद्व ईमहे राधो विश्वायुः सौभगम् ॥  
(ऋग्वेद ५।५३।१३)

\*पूर्वीरस्य निषिधो मर्त्येषु पुरु वसूनि पृथिवी बिभर्ति ।  
इन्द्राय द्याव ओषधीस्तापो रयि रक्षन्ति जीर्यो वनानि ॥  
(ऋग्वेद ३।५।१५)

†परावतं नासत्यानुदेशामुच्चाबुध्नं चक्रथुर्जिह्वाबारम् ।  
क्षरन्नापो न पायनाय राये सहस्राय तृष्यते गोतमस्य ॥

(ऋ० १।११६।६)

Through song may we find hearing fraught with plenty : near to the ripened grain approach the sickle.

“Wise, through desire of bliss from Gods, the skilful bind the traces fast,

And lay the yokes on either side.

“Arrange the buckets in their place, securely fasten on the straps.

We will pour forth the well that hath copious stream, fair flowing well that never fails.

“I pour the water from the well with pails prepared and goodly straps.

Unfailing, full, with plenteous stream.” §

(Rg. Veda X-101. 3,4,5,6. Tr. Griffith)

There is a whole hymn dealing with agriculture:

युनक्त सीरा वि युगा ननुध्व कृते योनौ वपतेह बीजम् ।

गिरा च श्रुष्टिः सभगा असन्नो नेदीय इत्सृण्य पक्वमेयात् ॥३॥

सीरा युञ्जन्ति कवयो युगा वि तन्वते पृथक् ।

धीरो देवेषु सुम्नया ॥४॥

निराहावान् कृणोतन सं वरत्रा दधातन ।

सिञ्चामहा अवतमुद्रिण वय सुषेकमनुपक्षितम् ॥५॥

इष्कृताहावमवत सुवग्त्र सुषेचनम् ।

उद्रिणं सिञ्चे अक्षितम् ॥६॥

(ऋग्वेद १०।१०।१।३—६)

1. We through the lord of the field, even as through a friend, obtain.

What nourisheth our kine and steeds. In such may he be good to us.

2. As the cow yieldeth milk, pour for us freely, lord of the fields, the wave that beareth sweetness, oozing honey, well-purified like butter, and let the lord of the Holy Law be gracious.

3. Sweet be the plants for us, the heavens, the waters, and full of sweets for us be air's mid-region.

May the field's lord for us be full of sweetness and may we follow after him uninjured.

4. Happily work our steers and men, may the plough furrow happily.

Happily be the traces bound ; happily may he ply the goad.

5. Plough and ploughmen ! welcome ye this laud, and with the water which ye have made in heaven.

Bedew ye both this earth of ours.

6. Auspicious ploughshare, come thou near;  
We venerate and worship thee,

That thou mayst bless and prosper us and bring us fruit abundantly.



7. May farmer lord press the furrow down,  
may the protector farmer guide its course aright.  
May'she (furrow) as rich in milk, be drained for  
us through each succeeding year.

8. Happily let the shares turn up the plough-  
land, happily go the ploughers with the oxen.  
With meath and milk rain makes us happy.  
Grant us prosperity, plough and ploughmen. \*

(Rg. Veda IV-57.1-8)

\*क्षेत्रस्य पतिना वयं हितेनेव जयामसि ।

गामश्वं पोषयित्वा स नो मृडातीदृशे ॥१॥

क्षेत्रस्य पते मधुमन्तमूर्मिं धेनुरिव पयो अस्मासु धुक्ष्व ।

मधुश्चुतं घृतमिव सुपूतं मृतस्य नः पतयो मृडयन्तु ॥२॥

मधुमतीरोषधीर्द्याव आपो मधुमन्त्रो भवत्वन्तरिक्षम् ।

क्षेत्रस्य पतिर्मधुमान्नो अस्त्वरिष्यन्तो अन्वेनं चरेम ॥३॥

शुनं वाहा शुनं नरः शुनं कृषतु लाङ्गलम् ।

शुनं वरत्रा बध्यन्तां शुनमष्ट्रामुदिङ्गय ॥४॥

शुनासीराविमां वाचं जुषेथां यद्विवि चक्रथुः पयः ।

तेने मामुपशिञ्चतम् ॥५॥

अर्वाची सुभगे भव सीते वन्दामहे त्वा ।

यथा नः सुभगाससि यथा नः सुफलाससि ॥६॥

इन्द्रःसीतां निगृह्णातु तां पूषानु यच्छतु ।

सा नः पयस्वती दुहामुत्तरामुत्तरां समाम् ॥७॥

शुनं नः फाला वि कृषन्तु भूमि शुनं कीनाशा अभियन्तु वाहैः ।

शुनं पर्जन्यो मधुना पयोभिः शुनासीरा शुनमस्मासु घत्तम् ॥८॥

(ऋ० ४।५७।१-८)

Here the following points are very clear :—

- (1) The Vedas teach us how to till the soil.
- (2) The farmer's work is not humble. It carries with it the respect of all . He is the lord of the field. All those who live upon his produce look upon him with veneration.
- (3) There is a mention of most developed implements of farming. The ploughshare goes deep into the ground and runs swiftly.
- (4) Farming is a constant business, continuing from year to year, and bringing better crops.
- (5) The ploughshare is something to be proud of. It is compared with the cow that yieldeth sweet milk.
- (6) As usual with the Vedas, men exert themselves with all the ardour of a labourer, but invoke the help of God for their success, thus always spiritualizing their material welfare.

The twelfth book of the Atharva Veda begins with a beautiful description of agricultural land of which any farmer can be well proud. Here\* are a few verses from Chapter I.

1. Let that earth be full of cattle and corn for us which is open on all four sides, in which

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\* (१) यस्याश्चतस्रः प्रदिशः पृथिव्याः यस्यामन्नं कृष्टयः संबभूवुः । या बिभर्ति बहुधा प्राणदेजत्सा नो भूमिर्गोष्वप्यन्ने दधातु ॥४॥

farmers grow corn and which bears living beings of all types. (4)

2. Let the earth give us fire (life) and wealth, which is supporter of all, yielder of different corns, firm footing for all life, breast of gold (keeper of wealth), feeder of the world, keeper of all sorts of life, and nourisher of the wise and the godly. (6)

3. Let that earth give us nourishment as the mother gives suck to her babe. (10)

4. O earth, let thy hills, rocks and mountains be auspicious to us. May I unconquered, unkilld, un-wounded, settle on the earth which is rich, cultivable, fit to produce all sorts of crops, firm, expanded and well-guarded. (11)

5. The earth is my mother. I am the earth's son. Rain is my father. Let him bring us up. (12)

(२) विश्वंभरा वसुधानी प्रतिष्ठा हिरण्यवक्षा जगतो निवेशनी । वैश्वानरं  
बिभ्रती भूमिरग्निमिन्द्र ऋषभा द्रविणे नो दधातु ॥६॥

(३) सा नो भूमिर्वि सृजतां माता पुत्राय मे पयः ॥१०॥

(४) गिरयस्ते पर्वता हिमवन्तोऽ रण्यं ते पृथिवि स्योनमस्तु । बभ्रुं कृष्णां  
रोहिणीं विश्वरूपां ध्रुवां भूमि पृथिवीमिन्द्रगुप्ताम् । अजीतोऽ-  
हतो अक्षतोऽ ध्येष्ठां पृथिवीमहम् ॥११॥

(५).....माताभूमिः पुत्रोऽग्रहं पृथिव्याः । पर्जन्यः पिता स उ नः पिपर्तु ॥

6. Let that enriched soil enrich us.' (13)

7. O earth, may summer, rainy season, winter, autumn, chilly season, spring, in short all seasons yield to us all kinds of produce. (36)

8. We bow respectfully to well-irrigated earth, the consort of rain, in which grow corn, paddy and barley, and whose children are all people. (42)

9. On whose breast do grow big towns, on which agriculturists do their tillage, which has in its womb all kinds of nourishment, may the Lord of Universe, make that earth habitable for us. (43)

In this connection says Das in his *Rigvedic Culture* :—"Barley and paddy (yava and dhanya) must have been the staple crops of the Vedic Aryans from the very beginning. European scholars assert that the two words in the Rg. Veda were

(६)....सा नो भूमिर्वर्धयद् वर्धमाना ॥१३॥

(७) ग्रीष्मस्ते भमे वर्षाणि शरद्धेमन्तः शिशिरो वसन्तः । ऋतवस्ते विहिता  
हायनीरहोरात्रे पृथिवि नो दुहाताम् ॥३६॥

(८) यस्यामन्नं ब्रीहियवौ यस्या इमाः पञ्चकृष्टयः । भूम्यै पर्जन्यपत्न्यै  
नमो ऽस्तु वर्षमेदसे ॥४२॥

(९) यस्याः पुरो देवकृताः क्षेत्रे यस्या विकुर्वते । प्रजापतिः पृथिवीं विश्व-  
गर्भामाशामाशां रण्यां नः कुर्यात् ॥४३॥ (अथर्ववेद १२।१।४, ६,  
१०, ११, १२, १३, ३६, ४२, ४३)

the general names for grains of all kinds. This may be true in certain cases, but it does not follow that the Vedic Aryans were not at all acquainted with the particular corns, known as barley (yava) and paddy (dhanya). On the other hand, there is reason to believe that these were the principle corns that they cultivated and subsisted upon. Barley was, as it still is, a spring crop, sown in winter, which does not require much rains for its cultivation. A few showers of winter rain are sufficient for it. But the cultivation of paddy (dhanya) requires plenty of rain and begins from the very commencement of rainy season. It was for the successful cultivation of dhanya, one of the staple food grains of the Aryans, that the regular fall of rain was needed, and it was to ensure this regular fall that Indra, the God of thunder and rain, was invoked, and the sacrifices and various *sattras*, both annual and periodical, performed.”\*

Here the author of the *Rigvedic Culture* has mentioned sacrifices and *sattras* which were performed to invoke the aid of God Indra. Let us say, in passing, that the remark smacks of later

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\**Rigvedic Culture* Chapter VII, pp. 266-67 by  
A. C. Das.

mythology. It is, no doubt, true that Yajnas were performed at different periods of the year as they are physically conducive to the yield of rain. In later books we find an elaborate account of Yajnas being helpful in the formation of clouds.

In one of the above verses of the Atharva Veda, there is a mention of enriched soil which enriches men. This shows that the Arya farmers were awake to the need of constantly fertilizing their soil. In Book XIX-31.3 we read of, 'Karishinim phalavatim, sudhamiram. (करीषिणीं फलवतीं सुधामिराम्) Karish is cow dung. It is the best fertilizer of the soil which bears the greatest yield of fruit. A similar mention of cow dung is found in Atharva Veda III-14.3.\*

The fertility of soil decreases gradually as crops after crops grow thereon in succession. In verse XII—1.-7§ we find that the scientists, agriculturists, should very closely watch the strength of their soil. They should not sleep over it on any account.

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\*सजग्माना अबिभ्यषीरस्मिन् गोष्ठे करीषिणीः ।

बिभ्रतीः सोम्य मध्वनमीवा उपेतन ॥

(अथर्ववेद ३।१४।३)

§यां रक्षन्त्यस्वप्ना विश्वदानीं देवा भूमिं पृथिवीमप्रमा-

दम् । सानो मधुप्रियं दुहामथो उक्षतु वर्चसा ॥

(अथर्ववेद १२।१।७)

“Only that soil yields sweet food , which is well looked after by learned persons, without sleeping or negligence. Such a soil is the giver of all things.” (Atharva Veda, XII-1.7)

In the next verse\* are given different devices whereby the land is reclaimed from under the water. Such a soil is abundantly rich. It gives strength to the state also, as no state can prosper without good agriculture. *Twishim* (lustre), *balam* (power) and *rashtram* (strong state) all these arise from agriculture.

Different processes of gathering crops have been described by Das as follows :—

“When the corns were ripe they were cut down with the sickle (*Srini* Rv. I-58.4; X-101.3; 106.6 or *datra* VIII-78.10), bound into bundles (*Parsha* Rv. X-48.7) and beaten out on the floor of the granary (*Khala* Rv. X-48.7). The grain was then separated from the straw and refuse either by a sieve (*titau*) or a winnowing fan (Rv. X-71.2). The winnower was called *Dhanyakrita* (Rv. X-94.13) and the grain was measured in a vessel called *Urdara* (Rv. II-14. 11). The grains were stored in grain receptacles called *sthivi* (Rv. X-68.3) .” (A. C. Das : *Rigvedic Culture* Chapter VII, p.278)

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\*सा नो भूमिस्त्विषि बलं राष्ट्रे दधातुत्तमे ॥  
(अथर्ववेद १२।१।८)

In Yajur Veda (XVIII. 12\*), we come across following names of grains :—

“May my rice-plants, and my barley, and my beans and my sesamum, and may kidney-beans, and my vetches, and my millet, and my *Panicum milliaceum*, and my *Panicum Frumentaceum* and my wild rice, and my wheat and my lentils prosper by sacrifice.” (Griffith’s Trans) “Type of parched corn is jujube fruit; wheat of the roasted grains of rice; jujube the type of barley-meal, and Indra-grains of gruel-groats§.” (Griffith’s Trans. Yajur XIX. 22) .

If you just compare the grains enumerated above with those which the world is aware of today, it can be said without exaggeration or prejudice that in this respect the world has not much advanced. In one respect, there is a decided deterioration. It may not be material but moral it decidedly is. The society which was in posses-

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\*ब्रीह्यश्च मे यवाश्च मे माषाश्च मे तिलाश्च मे मुद्गाश्च मे  
खल्वाश्च मे प्रियङ्गवश्च मेऽणवश्च मे श्यामा-  
काश्च मे नीवाराश्च मे गोधूमाश्च मे मसूराश्च  
मे यज्ञेन कल्पन्ताम् । (यजुर्वेद १८।१२)  
§धानानां रूपं कुवलं परीवापस्य गोधूमाः । सक्तूनां  
रूपं बदरमुपवाकाः करम्भस्य ॥ (यजुर्वेद  
१९।२२)



sion of so many grains and of the knowledge of growing them and utilizing them to the best point, must have been much above the savage or pastoral level. The society in which the grower of these corns was looked upon with veneration must have been truly noble. We do not find that position in society allocated to the farmer today even in the most advanced nations. Today his position is comparatively much inferior. He is subservient to the comforts and will of the others. To go back to the Vedas would mean to elevate the position of the agriculturist and to reinstate him on the position which by nature and merit belongs to him.

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## CHAPTER IX

### CATTLE

Cattle naturally come immediately after agriculture. Cows and bullocks, horses and donkeys are natural sharers of man in his labour as well as the prize which that labour brings. In the Sama Veda, we come across a prayer :—

“May God bring blessings to our cow and our horse, our labourer and our plants\*.”

Modern scientist may, perhaps, laugh at the idea of attaching so much importance to cattle when new inventions have replaced them with more productive and less bothersome machinery. But our achievements, however boastful of them we may be, are not an unalloyed gold. It means that we have banished from our circle a large majority of sentient beings and deprived them of the chances of rising higher in the scale of evolution. Viewing broadly, the world is a large family, of which man is only one member, though perhaps the most gifted one. There is a universal

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\*स नः पवस्व शं गवे शं जनाय शमर्वते । शं राजन्नोषधीभ्यः ॥

(सामवेद उत्तराचिक, अ० १ । मंत्र ३)

kinship between animal and animal. The elder ones of the family are elders not because they enjoy the most, but because they are the most conducive to the evolution of their less developed kinsfolk. Just as the duty of a civilized nation is not to enslave or kill the savage, but to so behave that the savage may gradually rise to the level of the former, similarly the duty of mankind in general is to so behave that lower animals too should rise in their scale of evolution. The shepherd who taught his dog to watch his sheep has done no little service to the dog or its species. He has raised the dog to the level of a watch-man. He could have contrived the ways of dispensing with the dog's services and bringing in his place some sort of electric machine. But it means the shirking from a duty which man as a superior animal owed to his inferior fellow beings.

Judged from that point of view, the achievements of the early Vedic people, whoever they might have been, in the domain of the domestication of animals must have been most praiseworthy. Those who daily travel by rail cannot make a correct estimate of the value of Watt's or George Stephenson's inventions. The things are too familiar. Today we cannot conceive of the society which knew no steam engines. Simi-

larly once take yourself to that stage when there was no relation between man and horse or man and cow. Horses there were and there were men. But men did not know what help to take from the horse. It was wild. It would not listen to him. It did not know what yielding to the stirrup or the bridle means. It was free, free in the sense of being exclusive. It did not know how to love its master nor how to share in the glory of war. Think, just of the first man who thought of domesticating the horse, i.e., allowing it a place in his home and making it understand what a share in common life means. Was it not a big invention ? Much bigger than that of any modern invention. When you employ a labourer in a factory, you not only take your work or provide the labourer with his living, you do much more. You put him in such environments that he may learn what he did not know before, that he may develop his potentialities, he may be cultured. A man who has been turned out of an office after three years' service, is not the same man as he was when he joined his duties on the first day of his service. Now he is rather better versed in his art, he is an experienced man, which means he is more cultured. The same analogy holds good in case of domesticated animals. When I see

a loose cow or a loose ox wandering in the streets of Delhi or Allahabad, I cannot but be struck with the contrast which these animals exhibit from those of far off rural areas. They are more gentle, more social and much less troublesome. By constantly living in crowded cities, they have instinctively learnt at least some duties of citizenship. If you pass by a loose cow in a narrow Allahabad lane, she will not shake her horns at you, she will not quarrel with you. She would, as a rule, go her way and let you go your way. Is it not an unconscious training in citizenship ?

It is not definitely known in what order the Vedic people in early ages domesticated animals. Which animal was the first to get admission into a human habitation ? It may have been a cow, it may have been a horse or perhaps, the domestication of both these might have been approximately simultaneous. In most Vedic verses, the cow and the horse are together mentioned. They are both sacred. When the family elder or the family priest prays to God, he prays for the health and happiness, of not only his progeny but his cows and horses as well at the same time and in the same breath. We quote here a few of the mantras:—

1. "O Indra, Lord of all wealth, confer upon us the honour of being the possessors of thousands of cows and horses." (This is the strain of the prayer embodied in the seven verses of the 29th hymn of the 1st mandal of the Rg. Veda).

2. O Lord of our homes, thou be the increaser of our wealth in the form of cows and horses. Let us enjoy thy never-ending friendship. Treat us as the father treats his sons. (Rv. VII-54. 2)

3. Our warrior kings who make us possessors of wealth in the form of cows, horses and gold, may throughout their whole life, O Indra and Vayu, be able to overcome their enemies in battle-fields, with the help of their horses and warriors.

(Rv. VII-90.6)

1. आ तू न इन्द्र शंसय गोष्वश्वेषु शुभ्रिषु सहस्रेषु तुवीमघ । (ऋग्वेद मंडल १, सूक्त २९, (सातो मंत्रों के अन्त का भाग)

2. वास्तोष्पते प्रतरणो न एधि गयस्फानो गोभिरश्वेभिरिन्दो ।

अजरासस्ते सख्ये स्याम पितेव पुत्रान् प्रति नो जुषस्व ॥

(ऋग्वेद ७।५४।२)

3. ईशानासा ये दधते स्वर्णो गोभिरश्वेभिर्वसुभिर्हिरण्यैः ।

इन्द्रवायू सूरयो विश्वमायुरर्वद्भिर्वीरैः पूतनासु सद्युः ॥

(ऋग्वेद ७।९०।२६)

4. This our treasure is very strongly built with stones filled with cows, horses and wealth. Traders well versed in the art of preserving this wealth guard it well. O bitch (dog-like greed), thou hast vainly come to this doubtful place (to deprive us of this wealth). (Rv. X-108. 7)

5. O God, harm us not in our seed and progeny, harm us not in life, nor in cows and horses. Slay not our horses in wrath. We invoke thee with devotion. (Rv. I-114. 8)

6. O people, look at the strength of God and have faith in Him. He owns cows. He owns horses. He owns vegetable kingdom. He owns waters. He owns forests.

(Rv. I-103. 5)

4. अयं निधिः सरमे अद्रिबुध्नो गोभिरश्वेभिर्वसुभिर्नृष्टः ।

रक्षन्ति तं पणधो ये सगोषा रेकूपदमलकमा जगन्थ ॥

(ऋग्वेद १०।१०८।७)

5. मा नस्तोके तनये मा न आर्यौ मा नो गोषु मानो अश्वेषु रीरिषः ।

वीरान् मा नो रुद्रभामितो वधीर्हविष्मन्तः सदमित् त्वा हवामहे ॥

(ऋग्वेद १।११४।८)

6. तदस्येदं पश्यता भूरि पुष्टं अदिन्द्रस्य घत्तन वीर्याय ।

स गा अविन्दत् सो अविन्ददश्वान् त्स ओषधीः सो अपः स वनानि ॥

(ऋग्वेद १।१०३।५)

7. He who is the protector of cows and horses;  
He who is the firm controller of every holy act;  
He who is the destroyer of even the most powerful  
unholy person; Him do we invoke for friendship,  
Him who claims the devotion of all people.

(Rv. I-101. 4)

8. O God, he who wants to destroy the essence  
of our horses, cows or bodies, that thief, that enemy  
may perish with his progeny and self.

(Rv. VII-104. 10)

9. O performer of hundreds of sacrifices,  
thou art the creator of horses and cows. Drink  
*Soma* for thy happiness. Thou art the master of  
all hosts and all space. Thou art the Lord of truth.  
The prayer which we offer is really thy meed.

(Rv. VIII-36. 5.)

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7. यो अश्वानां यो गवां गोपतिर्वशी य आरितः कर्मणि कर्मणि स्थिरः ।  
वीडोश्चिदिन्द्रो यो असुन्वतो वधो मरुत्वन्तं सखाय हवामहे ।

(ऋग्वेद १।१०।१४)

8. यो नो रसं दिप्सति पित्वो अग्ने यो अश्वानां यो गवां यस्तनूनाम् ।  
रिपुः स्तेनः स्तेयकृद् दभ्रमेतु नि ष ह्यीयतां तन्वा तना च् ।

(ऋग्वेद ७।१०।४।१०)

9. जनिताश्वानां जनिता गवामसि पिबा सोमं मदाय कं शतक्रतो ।  
यं ते भागमधारयन् विश्वाः सेहानः पृतना उरु अयः समप्सुजिन् मरुत्वा इन्द्र  
सत्पते ॥

(ऋ० ८।३६।५)



10. O Lord, give to thy worshipper plenty of food; so that he may preserve thy treasure. Give him waters, vegetables, forests, cows, horses and men.

(Rv. VI-39. 5)

Here we have given only a few of numberless such mantras in which horses, cows and men are blessed together. There are other texts in which cows and horses have been separately mentioned. My rough (by no means very accurate) counting has elicited the following figures :—

The word 'go' (cow) has been mentioned in no less than 723 places in Rg. Veda, 97 in Yajur Veda, 180 in Sama Veda and 331 in Atharva Veda, total 1331. Similarly, *ashva* (horse) is mentioned in 408 places in Rg. Veda, 65 in Yajur Veda, 40 in Sama Veda and 82 in Atharva Veda. These two are very common names for the cow and the horse. It is true that *go* and *ashva* have other senses and significances too. But to me it appears, that the primary meaning of 'go' is the cow and of 'ashva' the horse. Besides, the word 'Aghnya' which derivatively means "not killable"

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<sup>10</sup>. नू गृणानो गृणते प्रत्न राजन्निषः पित्व वसुदेयाय पूर्वीः ।

अप ओषधीरविषा वनानि गा अवंतो नूनृचसेरिरीहि ॥

(ऋ० ६।३९।५)

is invariably used for the cow. I found it at 20 places in the Rg. Veda, 5 in the Yajur Veda, 2 in Sama Veda and 33 in the Atharva Veda. '*Dhenu*' is another word for the cow which means 'drink giver.' I found it at 76 places in the Rg. Veda, at 22 places in the Yajur Veda, 25 in the Sama Veda, and 43 in the Atharva Veda. For horse, there is another word '*Arva*' which I came across at 107 places in the Rg. Veda, 25 in the Yajur Veda, 16 in the Sama Veda and 14 in the Atharva Veda. I repeat it again in order to preclude all chances of mistake that my counting has been very rough; I have given the minima.

Some persons have suggested that the Hindus loved the cow while the Semetics loved the horse. This is a mischievous suggestion quite un-warranted by the Vedic texts. To me it appears that almost equal regard has been paid to these two animals as the above figures testify. They have been bracketted together with men when blessings are being sought. They were domestic animals, brought up with care, loved and protected from all ills. We often come across the word '*Hari*' (हरी dual) in connection with '*ratha*' (रथ chariot) which shows that two horses were generally yoked in carriages. What those *rathas* were in early

Vedic ages is not known. Now-a-days in India we see only bullock driven chariots with a dome-like shape and a crest at the top. Painters and artists have also depicted the same shape in pictures. But these chariots do not at all suit battle purposes. The cow is perhaps closer-related than the horse. It gives milk to children. It remains at home. The word '*duhita*' meaning 'daughter' has been derived by the famous lexicographer Yaska as one who milks the cows. It shows that girls used to milk cows at home, while the male members of the family cared more for the horse. The animal which brought so many 'unmixed blessings to the family must have been the most endeared and her utility and importance must have been gratefully acknowledged all through. She is the goddess of the Aryan home. The first loaf that the house-wife bakes is reserved for the cow. She is garlanded and respected in divers other ways like an honoured guest at auspicious occasions. There is one point which is necessary to be cleared in this connection. The question of beef-eating and eating the flesh of the horse has often been discussed by different authors. The Hindus of the present day look upon both these practices with horror. How far this horror is justified is a question. Abinas Chandra Das in

his well received book *Rig Vedic India* writes :

“It may be argued that though bulls were sacrificed, and their flesh cooked and offered to the God, it was not partaken of by the sacrificers or the Aryans. But in Rv. VI-39. 1, the sage Bharadvaja distinctly prays to Indra to grant him and the worshippers food with ‘go’ or cow as the principal item” (p.75). I wonder why the above verse (Rv. VI-39. 1) has been cited by the learned author. In the text, there is nothing to prove that beef is mentioned here. The author could not help realising the weakness of his position, as the above sentence is immediately followed by the following para :

“This, of course, may be interpreted to mean that by the word ‘go’ or cow is implied not her flesh, but milk and products like butter, curd, ghee, etc. This may be a possible explanation but, as Professor Wilson says, ‘there does not seem to be anything in the Veda,’ that militates against the literal interpretation.” (pp. 75-76)

That the eating of beef is mentioned in certain later Sanskrit books is a fact. But it is not proved to the hilt that the Vedic Aryans allowed beef-eating as a proper thing to do. In the Vedas, there is no clear mention of it. The cow is called

*aghnya* ( अघ्न्या ) or unkillable. In the first verse of the Yajur Veda, there is a prayer that there be cows *anamiva* and *ayakshma* ( अनमीवा अयक्ष्मा ), free of diseases and that God may be pleased to protect the cattle of the *yajamana* ( यजमान ) or sacrificer. The word 'sacrifice' has nothing to do with killing. It means a sacred act ( श्रेष्ठतमाय कर्मणे ). It is a gross mistake to suppose that wherever is *yajna* ( यज्ञ ) or *yajamana* ( यजमान ) or *ritviija* ( ऋत्विज ), an animal has to be slaughtered and offered to the deity. It is a misfortune that certain dismal activities of the *yajna* of the later perverted times have associated the words sacrifice and sacrificer with slaughter of animals. In fact, sacrifice means a sacred act and sacrificer the doer of that act. In Sanskrita we have *pitri yajna* ( पितृ यज्ञ ), worship of parents, and *atithi yajna* ( अतिथि यज्ञ ), reverence paid to the guest. Obviously in these compound words, *yajna* cannot mean slaughter of parents or guests. By the way we may make mention of one more word which creates some difficulty. That is *goghna* ( गोघ्न ). Derivatively, it means the killer of the cows. But later on it was applicable to the guests for whom cows were to be slaughtered. That this was the sense prevalent in certain periods of the Hindu history is true. It is no use denying it. But in all the four Vedas

the word *goghna* (गोघ्न) has been used only once, i.e., Rg. Veda I- 114. 10. Here there are two words (गोघ्नमुत्त पुरुषघ्नम्) (*goghnam uta purushaghnam*). Griffith translates it as follows :—

“Far be thy dart that killeth men or cattle; thy bliss be with us, O thou Lord of Heroes. Be gracious unto us, O God, and bless us, and then vouchsafe us doubly strong protection.\* ”

(Rv. I-114. 10)

Here ‘*goghna*’ means a cow - killer. He is bracketted with ‘*purushaghn*’ or man-killer; and God has been invoked to keep these two disturbers of peace far from mankind. Is it a permission for beef-eating and cannibalism or just the opposite ? It is significant that the Vedas do not mention the word ‘*goghna*’ at any other place and the sense of the guest for whom a cow is to be dressed is only a later development. Perhaps the word crept into the Vedic literature from beef-eaters. India is such a vast country inhabited by all sorts of people good or bad, righteous or unrighteous, Vedic and anti-Vedic. Its history spreads over so many milleniums of vast vicissitudes

\*आ रे ते गोघ्नमुत्त पुरुषघ्नं क्षयद्वीर सुम्नमस्मे ते अस्तु ।

मृडा च नो अघि च ब्रूहि देवाधा च नः शर्म यच्छ द्विवर्हाः ॥

(ऋग्वेद १।११४।१०)

that it will be quite unfair to impute to the Vedas what is not directly found there. India is at present inhabited by many sections of beef-eating people. But they are not at all Vedic. If any Sanskrita book is written these days, it will naturally make a mention of beef-eaters, beef-cooking and slaughter houses for cows. There are at present certain Hindus, though very rare, who carry on the anti-Vedic practices of offering cow's flesh in *yajnas*. But this is the perversion of things. The sentiments of the Vedic Rishis, the context as well as the long history of the Vedic ideals all go to show that cow was worshipped for her utility as giver of milk, like the mother, and not for its flesh. Five parts of the cow, which are supposed to be usable are called *pancha-gavya* (पंच गव्य). They are milk, curd, clarified butter, or ghee, urine and cow-dung; (क्षीरं दधि तथा चाज्यं मूत्रं गोमयमेवच). They do not contain flesh. Several times the word 'go' means the products of the cow, I mean, the above five.

It is a misfortune that most often translators or commentators have imposed their own ideas upon the Vedas. They have looked upon things from the present day man's eyes and sometimes there is a terrible confusion. For instance in *Shatapatha Brahmana* (III. 4. 1. 17) there is the mention of a herb called *ashvabala* (अश्वबाल). The word

literally means the hair of a horse. But in fact it has nothing to do with that animal. Perhaps it got its name from the similarity which it bears with the horse's hair. Similarly, the English word cows-lip which is the name of a flower and bears its name, perhaps, from its similarity with the lip of the cow, is not any part of the cow. If after a few hundred years, people forget their significance and take to mean the parts of a cow's body or a horse's body, it will be a great error. Similarly, we have to be careful in interpreting the words lest some gross confusion may ensue.

It was only a digression and the writer cannot but apologise for it but the question is so often raised, that there was a temptation to throw some light on the question. A few awkward references here and there do present some difficulty of interpretation, but the general trend of the whole Vedic literature is the disapproval of all the practices which are connected with blood-shed or slaughter. *Pashu* ( पशु ) or cattle is generally connected with *Praja* ( प्रजा ) or progeny and the welfare of both these is the constant desire of an Aryan home. It has not only an economic significance. The Aryan socialism surpasses the limits of home, sect, country or nation and includes in its widest ideal circle every sentient being. It is



why the Vedas say, "Let me look upon all living beings with a friendly eye. (मित्रस्याहं चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षे Yajurveda 36. 18 ). In the Preface to his famous book *The Idea of Progress*, J. B. Bury writes, "When Isocrates formulated the rule of life, "Do unto others", he probably did not mean to include among "others" slaves or savages. The Stoics and the Christians extended its application to the whole of living humanity." But long before the Stoics or the Christians, the Aryans of the Vedic times included among others even animals and other sentient beings and helped them as far as nature allowed to share the happiness of their homes and society. Will it not be a real progress to go back to the Vedas ?

What other animals do we find mentioned in the Vedas ? Of course, the horse and the cow top the list. But there are many others. For instance, we come across 'camels' twice-ten in the Atharva Veda (XX-127.2) yoked in chariots. In the Rg. Veda, we find camel at 5 places. The Sanskrit word for 'camel' is '*Ushtra*' (उष्ट्र) which in Persian becomes *shutur* and in Hindi '*Unta*' (ऊँट). Another word, *Kramela* (क्रमेल) which resembles 'camel' is not found in the Vedas. In Rv. VIII-46.31, hundreds of camels have been mentioned along with oxen; in VIII-46.22, two

thousand. In VIII-5.37 camels have been mentioned along with horses and cows. The Yajur Veda (XXXI) divides the animals into two classes: cattle or domesticated animals *gramya* ( ग्राम्य ) and wild ones ( *aranya* a अरण्य ). The former are to be preserved by care and love and the latter, if harmful, are to be destroyed or at least warded off. Of all the domesticated animals, only the dog is a flesh-eater; others are all herbivorous. The reason is that the Vedic Aryans were the respectors of all life, of whatever kind, unless it encroaches upon other living beings and renders their lives unsafe. Kill you can, but only to save others from being killed. Live and let live and as long as you let live, no body has any justification to harm you. It is *Ahimsa* which has most often been negatively translated into non-violence, but which in fact is more congruous with universal love based upon the consciousness of universal kinship.

That cattle play an important part in a culture or a civilization has too often been ignored. At least very little importance has been attached to it. But it is due to some metaphysical misconceptions of the nature of the spirit. The Yajur Veda (XL. 6) emphasizes that he who sees all sentient beings in God and God in all sentient

beings does not come to grief. As long as this aspect of the Vedic teachings is not emphasized, our culture will remain dwarfed. Wholesale slaughter of animals creates in man a callousness which results mostly in out-bursts of all sorts of animal passions. Our character is like a thick rope made of thousands of very delicate strands, which if not well looked after, go snap in a moment.

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## CHAPTER X

### INDUSTRY, ART AND CRAFT

‘Industry’ is both complementary and supplementary to agriculture in the material evolution of a culture. What the farmer produces in his fields has to be converted into hundreds of forms in order to be really useful to mankind. Besides, agriculture itself needs the help of various implements which only industry can bring into existence. Agriculture does not mean wild growth of corn. It is culture, i.e., something in which human intelligence and human effort are necessary. Let us see what the Vedas say on this subject. “Watch closely the doings of the Almighty, whereby you may choose your undertakings. He is the best friend of man.”\* (Rg. Veda I-22. 19)

Here is the secret of linking the human with the divine. God is the Great Creator. In order to be god-like a man too ought to be a creator. Creativeness is the greatest of human virtues and on creativeness depends industry. To be a

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\*विष्णोः कर्माणि पश्यत यतो व्रतानि पस्पशे ।

इन्द्रस्य युज्यः सखा ॥ (ऋग्वेद १।२२।१९)

passive dependent on nature is the characteristic of lower animals. They eat whatever food nature provides them with. They live in holes made by forces of nature. They clothe themselves with what naturally grows on their bodies. They contribute nothing of their own towards alleviating their own sufferings or satisfying their wants. A few of them, e.g., the weaver bird, the bee, the ant do exert in raising their level. But their exertion is much more of static nature. However highly developed and complicated a bee-hive may be, even this development is static. It does not exhibit that peculiar progressiveness which is the main feature of mankind. Man is more godly as he is more creative. The Vedic verse referred to above asks man to be a true and active disciple of the Greatest and most excellent of preceptors, i.e., God. Industry, therefore, is by no means merely a mundane affair. It is divine, it is religious. No nation can become industrious without developing those inner faculties of the spirit, without which a man cannot call himself spiritual. He who depends for everything upon God-made-things and does not contribute his own share does not understand the Design of the Great Maker and is, therefore, ungodly. Man is not made to be idle. The superior wisdom which

he is endowed with by nature is not to remain idle. God teaches him by example. God says, so to speak, "Do as I do". There is a prayer in the Rg. Veda: "Make my intellect as sharp as the sharpest edge of steel\*." And how can this intellect be sharpened ? Not by passively admiring the creation of God, but, by actively imitating it. 'Copy nature' is the most ill-understood and most misused sentence. It asks man to remain naked, to eat uncooked food, to live in caves. Surely it is not the way to copy nature. True copying of nature will be to observe the ways of nature, to understand the purpose of nature, to realize the place assigned by nature to us and to be able to produce the truest copy of nature's productions. This is industry. In the Yajur Veda, Chapter 40, Verse 2, we find : —"Only by doing actions should a man desire to live a life of a hundred years†." What actions ? Eating wildy grown fruits and berries and covering one's body with leaves is no action. Surely that must be a bad pupil who only admires his teacher's productions and produces nothing himself. Similarly he must be a bad

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\*चोदय धियमयसो न धाराम् ।

(ऋग्वेद ६।४७।१०)

†कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ॥

(यजुः ४०।२)

devotee whose days and nights pass in admiring God's deeds and living an idle life. The Vedic people did admire God's deeds but only so that they might themselves produce. Prayers in order to be true prayers ought to be heartfelt, headful and handful. Saintliness in religious spheres has too often been synonymous to inactiveness. There is a saying, in Hindi: "The snake enters into no-body's service. The bird does no work. The saint Maluka says that God is the feeder of all living beings."\*

God is, no doubt, the feeder of all. But evolution means a struggle. He who does not struggle remains unevolved and hence uncultured. This struggle, therefore, is the key-note of industry.

But we must remember that industry is not one thing. Not only there are an infinite number of men in the universe, their types are also infinite. We are at different stages of our evolution, which means that our faculties are different, tendencies are different, our relations to the society are different, our tastes are different and our requirements are different. This multiplicity of tastes, capacities and requirements gives rise to different industries,

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\*अजगर करे न चाकरी पंछी करे न काम ।

( दास मलुका कह गये सब के दाता राम ॥

which combined together contribute to the well-being of human society. This has been well-depicted in the four verses\* of Rg. Veda, Book IX, Hymn 112. Griffith translates them as follows :—

1. We all have various thoughts and plans,  
and diverse are the ways of men.

The Brahman seeks the worshipper,  
wright seeks the cracked, and leech  
the maimed. Flow, Indu, flow for  
Indra's sake.

2. The smith with ripe and seasoned plants  
with feathers of the birds of air,

With stones, and with enkindled  
flames, seeks him who hath a store of  
gold. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

3. A bard am I, my dad's a leech, mammy  
lays corn upon the stones.

Striving for wealth, with varied plans,

\*१. नानानां वा उ नो धियो वि व्रतानि जनानाम् ।

तक्षा रिष्टं रुतं भिषग् ब्रह्मा सुन्वन्तमिच्छतीन्द्रायेन्दो परिस्रव ॥

२. जरतीभिरोषधीभिः पर्णेभिः शकुनानाम् ।

कामारो अश्मभिर्दुर्भिर्हिरण्यवन्तमिच्छतीन्द्रायेन्दो परिस्रव ॥

३. कारुरहं ततो भिषगुपलप्रक्षिणी नना ।

नानाधियो वसूयवो ऽ नु गा इव तस्थिमेन्द्रायेन्दो परिस्रव ॥



we follow our desires like kine. Flow  
Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

4. The horse would draw an easy car, gay  
hosts attract the laugh and jest.  
The male desires his mate's approach,  
the frog is eager for the flood. Flow,  
Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

(Rg. Veda IX-112.1-4).

Griffith's rendering is not literal and needs elucidation at several points. But it serves our purpose. The first thing which the verses hint at, is the variation of capacities, and tastes even in the members of the same family. Its different members increase the wealth of the family by different types of pursuits, (नानाधियो वसूयोजन्.....

.....तस्थिम), i.e. we maintain our position in the family by seeking wealth (वसूयवः), in different pursuits according to our different temperaments. The second point is that in these verses, we have a direct reference to following trades :—

*Taksa* or carpenter.

*Bhishak* or physician.

४. अश्वो वोइहा सुखं रथं हसनामुपमन्त्रिणः ।

शेषो रोमण्वन्तो भेदौ वारिन् मण्डूक इच्छन्तीन्द्रायेन्दो परिस्रव ॥

(ऋग्वेद ९।११२।१-४)

*Karmara* or forger of weapons.

*Karuh* or artizan.

*Upalapraksini* grinder of corn.

*Ratha* or chariot which may be easy to draw.

Perhaps the first necessity of man is to invent a vessel to hold water. Water he could find in rivers and natural tanks. But he cannot bring water in his hands or mouth. In the Vedas, we find a mention of following things :

- (1) द्रोण (*Drona*), a cup made of leaves of certain trees. Such *donas* (दोना) or *dronas* are even now in vogue in India. If you purchase sweets in a confectioner's shop, he will give it in a leaf-made cup or plate, which can be thrown away after use. In these days in certain parts of India, paper has replaced the *drona* but considering the material of which the paper is made, the *drona* was much more hygienic. (Vide Rv. IX-65.6, IX-93.1) §

§ (१) यदद्भिः परिषिच्यसे मृज्यमानो गभस्त्योः ।  
द्रुणा सधस्थमदनुषे । (ऋ० ९।६५।६)

- (2) *Kalasha* ( कलश ) and *Kumbha* ( कुंभ )  
are jars or pots made of clay, or some  
metal. (Vide Rg. Veda I-117.12, III-  
32.15, IX-93.2, I-191.14, X-89.7)\*

The mention of pots with a wide range from wooden to golden shows that all strata of society have been noticed. Leaves are seen hanging on trees, but gold does not float in the air or on the surface of water or the earth. To discover gold ore, to find methods to purify it and to so smelt

(२) साकमुक्षो मर्जयन्त स्वसारो दश धीरस्य धीतयो धनुत्रीः ।

हरिः पर्यद्रवज्जाः सूर्यस्य द्रोण ननक्षे अत्यो न वाजी ॥

(ऋ० ६।६३।१)

\* (१) हिरण्यस्य कलश—As a jar made of gold.

(ऋ० १।११७।१२)

(२) आपूर्णो.....कलश. —Jar filled with water

(ऋ० ३।३२।१५)

(३) उदकं कुम्भिनीरिव—Water carried by women  
provided with jars.

(ऋ० १।१६१।१४)

(४) बिभेद.....कुम्भम्—broke like a jar.

(ऋ० १०।८६।७)

(५) द्रुणा...(ऋ० ६।६५।६)

NOTE : —द्रुण was so called because of being  
made of leaves or wood of a tree.

(द्रुणा द्रुममयेन पात्रेण.....सायण)

(६) द्रोणं ननक्षे—has in a wooden pot.

(ऋ० ६।६३।१)

(७) कलश उस्त्रियाभिः—Jars filled with milk etc.

(ऋ० ६।६३।२)

the metal as to make a good jar needs a series of industries. In the Yajur Veda, we find a reference to "golden cover" ( हिरण्यमयेन पात्रेण, XL. 17 ). This shows that the Vedas envisage a very rich and highly developed society.

From pots and jars, our attention naturally turns to artificial reservoirs of water such as wells, tanks, canals etc. The Aryans depend upon nature only so far as to copy it and to utilize natural resources for their own industrial pursuits. Their dependence on nature is never passive or animal like. They always make their own contribution.

Following references will be found useful :—§

§(1) अवस्तात् ततो भवतीति अवतः कूपः (सायण) ।

(2) तुभ्यं खाता अवता अद्रिदुग्धा मध्वश्चोत्तन्यभितो विरपशम् ।

(अथर्व २०।८८।३)

(For thee were dug wells springing from the mountain which murmuring round about pour streams of sweetness.—Griffith).

(8) इष्कृताहावमवतं सुवरत्रं सुषेचनम् । उद्रिणं सिञ्चे अक्षितम् ॥

(ऋ० १०।१०।१।६)

I pour the water from the well with pails prepared and goodly straps.

(4) प्रीणीताश्वान् हितं जयाथ स्वस्तिवाहं रथमिह कृणुध्वम् ।

द्रोणा हावमवतमश्म चक्रमंसत्रकोशं सिञ्चता नृपाणाम् ॥

(ऋ० १०।१०।१।७)

Refresh the horses, win the prize before you equip a chariot fraught with happy fortune.

Pour forth the well with stone wheel, wooden buckets, the drink of heroes, with the trough for armour. (Griffith)

1. *Kupya* ( कूप्य ) or well. (Rg. Veda I-105.17. Atharva Veda V-31.8).
2. *Avata* ( अवत ) or well. (Rg. Veda I-85.10, Atharva Veda XX-88.3).

These ' *Avatas* ' are said to be provided with *Varatra* ( वरत्र ) or ropes and *Kosha* ( कोश ) or pots to pull water.

The use of these wells or other artificial channels of water is not confined to drinking or other domestic purposes. Irrigation of farms is also their main object.

In the Yajur Veda (XXXIII.19) we come across *Avata* or well to which cows are brought to drink water.

In the Atharva Veda, there is again a mention of *Avatas* dug out of mountains with sweet water.

In the chapter on Agriculture, we have referred to Rg. Veda IV-57 in which there is a mention of *langala* ( लाङ्गल ) or ploughshare, *varatra* ( वरत्रा ) or straps with which the horses or oxen are to be tied, *shunasira* or plough etc. This shows that the people must know how to turn iron ore into pure metal and then make different implements out of it.

The Vedas mention an advanced stage of culinary art. While the Brahmacharins or students depend upon the house-holders for food and hermits who lead a forest life of religious renunciation must live on raw herbs, fruits or wild corn, roots etc., the householder must develop the art of cooking and improve his aesthetic faculty in the domain of dietary. All corns cannot be taken in their natural condition. They have to be crushed or ground into flour of different degrees and different forms, husk removed and refined meal procured. The fifty-second hymn of the Third Book of the Rg. Veda gives several farinaceous varieties\* which were used as ordinary food as well as offerings in the Havana. Here we give Griffiths' Translation :--

1. Indra, accept at break of day our *Soma* mixed with roasted corn, with groats, with cake, with eulogies.
2. Accept, O Indra, and enjoy the well-dressed sacrificial cake; oblations are poured forth to thee.

\*<sup>(1)</sup> धानावन्तं करम्भिणामपूपवन्तमुक्थिनम् । इन्द्र प्रातर्जुषस्व नः ॥

<sup>(2)</sup> पुरोडाशं पचत्यं जुषस्वेन्द्रा गुरस्व च । तुभ्यं हव्यानि सिञ्चते ॥

3. Consume our sacrificial cake, accept the songs of praise we sing, as he who woos accepts his bride.
4. Famed form of old, accept the cake at our libation, poured at dawn, for great, O Indra, is thy power.
5. Let roasted corn of our midday libations, and sacrificial cake here please thee, Indra.

What time, the lauding singer, keen of purpose and eager as a bull, with hymns implores thee.

6. At the third sacrifice, O thou whom many praise, give glory to the roasted corn and holy cake.

With offered viands and with songs may we assist thee, sage, whom Vaja and Ribhus wait upon.

(<sup>3</sup>) पुरोडाशं च नो घसो जोषयासे गिरश्च नः । वधूयुरिव योषणाम् ॥

(<sup>4</sup>) पुरोडाशं सनश्नुत प्रातः सावे जुषस्व नः । इन्द्र क्रतुर्हि ते बृहन् ॥

(<sup>5</sup>) माध्यन्दिनस्य सवनस्य धानाः पुरोडाशमिन्द्र कृष्वेह चारम् ।  
प्र यत् स्तोता जरिता तूर्णर्थो वृषायमाण उप गीभिरीद्रे ॥

(<sup>6</sup>) तृतीये धानाः सवने पुरुष्टुत पुरोडाशमाहुतं मामहस्व नः ।  
ऋभुमन्तं वाजवन्तं त्वा कवे प्रयस्वन्त उप शिक्षेम धीतिभिः ॥

7. The groats have we prepared for thee  
with Pushan, corn for thee, Lord of  
Bay steeds, with thy horses.

Eat thou the meat-cake, banded with  
the Maruts, wise Hero, Vritra-slayer,  
drink the Soma.

8. Bring forth the roasted corn to meet him  
quickly, cake for the bravest Hero, 'mid  
the heroes.

Indra, may hymns accordant with thee  
daily strengthen the bold one, for the  
draught of Soma.

The hymn contains the names of (1) *dhana*, or roasted barley, (2) *karambha* or ground form of roasted corn mixed with curd, (3) *apupa* or sweet cake, (4) *purodasha*, or food offered. *Apupas* (generally called *pua* or *pura*) are well known cakes in Indian villages and towns and are of several varieties. It speaks volumes about the longevity of the Indian tradition that common foods mentioned in the Vedic literature should

(<sup>7</sup>) पूषण्वते ते चक्रुमा करम्भं हरिवते हर्यश्वाय धानाः ।

अपूपमद्वि सगणो मरुद्भिः सोम पिब वृत्रहा शूर विद्वान् ॥

(<sup>8</sup>) प्रति धाना भरत तूयमस्मै पुरोडाशं वीरतमाय नृणाम् ।

दिवे दिवे सदृशीरिन्द्र तुभ्यं वर्धन्तु त्वा सोम पेयाय धृषणो ॥

(ऋग्वेद ६।५२।१-८)



come down to us in almost the same form and with a name so strickingly similar to its thousands-of-years old predecessor.

In Rg. Veda X-71.2§ we come across *saktu* purified with a *titau* or cribble. Like *apupa*, *saktu* too is very popular even today especially in Bihar and bordering regions and is called *ṣattu*. Grains are first parched, and then ground. The husk is removed in a *titau* or cribble, and the purified meal is eaten in several forms, mixed with salt, and pepper, or with sugar, or with sugar and curd both. When man begins to contribute his intelligence to the things of his daily needs, one kind of industry gives rise to several other kinds. You do not want to eat corn raw. Perhaps you find the crust too hard. You must grind it. This leads to the invention of grinding stones (see *upala* in Rg. Veda IX-112.3). The ground corn is full of husk of chaff, too prickly for swallowing. This needs a cribble or *titau* (just mentioned). To turn the meal, thus got, culinary utensils are needed. In the Yajur Veda in connection with *homās*, a great variety of utensils is mentioned,

§ सक्तुमिव तितउना पुनन्तो यत्र धीरा मनसा वाचमक्रत ।

अत्रा सखायः सख्यानि जानते भद्रैषां लक्ष्मीर्निहिताधि वाचि ॥

(ऋ० १०।७।१२)

which shows that the society envisaged therein must be very very advanced :—

1. *Sruk*-स्रुक् ... A ladle (vide Yajur Veda II. 1, VIII. 21, 63, XXVII. 14).
2. *Vayavya*-वायव्य ... XVIII. 21, a vessel.
3. *Chamasa*-चमसा ... A spoon, XVIII. 21.
4. *Drona-kalasha*-द्रोणकलश ... XVIII. 21.
5. *Gravana*-ग्रावाण ... XVIII. 21.
6. *Adhishavan*-अधिषवण ... XVIII. 21.
7. *Putabhrit*-पूतभृत् ... XVIII. 21.
8. *Adhavanīya*-आधवनीय ... XVIII. 21.

From No. 3 to No. 8, they are all vessels of different sizes and different forms. *Sruk* has been mentioned in the Rg. Veda at least at 14 places. (I- 84. 18 ; 110. 6 ; 144. 1 ; 110. 6 ; 162. 17 ; V-21.2 ; 42. 12 ; VI-11.5, VIII- 23. 22 ; 60. 2 ; X-17. 13; 91. 15 ; 118. 2 and 3). *Sruva* or a big ladle or spoon is mentioned in the Rg. Veda, I-116. 24 ; 121. 6, and X-96.9.

In the Yajur Veda, XIX.27, we come across\* *sata*, *vayavya*, *drona-kalasha*, *kumbhi*, *Ambhrina* and *Sthali*. These are all different vessels. *Thali* of present-day homes is the *sthali* of the Vedic

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\*वायव्यैवायव्यान्पाप्नोति सतेन द्रोण कलशम् ।

कुम्भीभ्यामम्भृणौ सुते स्थालीभिः स्थालीराप्नोति ॥ यजु० १९।२७ ॥

times, coming from the Sanskrita root *stha* or hold. *Graha* (ग्रह) is another word for a jar. It comes from the root *graha*, to hold. The common word *patra* (पात्र) meaning a vessel is very significant for its originality. It comes from the root *pa* (पा) to protect. The *patra* is meant to save its contents from being split.

Milk is the first food of every mammal, as it contains body-nourishing properties. It is why it comes into the world, simultaneously with us and from the same source, i.e., our mother. For the Vedic Aryans, the cow is our second mother, as she gives us nourishment long after our own mother fails. But their sharp intellect did not confine its activities to raw milk. They made several preparations out of it. A little brewing gave them curd, butter and ghee or clarified butter. *Ghrita* or clarified butter is perhaps the most important part of the milk. It has preserving qualities. It is why it is the most commonly used in India. Most confectionaries are based upon *ghrita*. The word is too common in all the four Vedas to need a reference here. There is no daily *homa* without *ghrita*. It is a very common branch of industry in India.

Industry is, in fact, connected with everything big or small, which we use in our every-day life.

From the house-wife's needle upto the pen of the statesman, or the machine-gun of a big army, all are concerned with industry. The name, *karmara*, *ratha-kara* etc. which we come across in the Vedas show that the Vedas do not ignore industry. It is a part of their religion as it is conducive to the growth of the seed-powers of the soul. Much of the reference to industry will be found in connection with other things. The credit of being the originators of industry must go to the Vedic Aryans and if the Vedic literature is studied with labour, patience and care, it is not improbable that the credit of maintaining a high level will also go to them.

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## CHAPTER XI

### CLOTHING

Clothing is, perhaps, the next greatest necessity of man after food. He was born naked and must have remained naked for a considerable time before he could apply his intellect to invent the artificial means to cover his nakedness. Clothing is a most prominent mark of civilization. Man is a clothing animal and no other animal could outstrip him in this respect. Even now there are some barbaric people who remain naked or cover only a portion of their nakedness with leaves or bunches of flowers. They are uncivilized. This shows that clothing is inseparably connected with civilization. But, however paradoxical it may sound, the civilized America has a certain section of people who advocate nudism. They think that man has gone down in the scale of morality and manners by covering his body with artificial things. This is extremism. Clothing has a cultural value, though it is not a distinctive feature of culture or even civilization. A naked man may be cultured and a partially-clad man too. Simi-

larly a perfectly-clad man may be uncivilized or uncultured. Culture has a basic-idea, a root-idea. All else is hinged upon that idea.

The question is what necessitated man to invent the art of clothing. Herbert Spencer, in his book 'Education', thinks that as there are many people who wear leaves of trees or bunches of flowers and do not need clothings to protect them from cold or heat, the first idea of clothing must have sprung from one's love for ornamentation and that clothing as a means of protection from the inclemencies of weather must have developed later on.

We have no adequate data for this inference. The love of ornamentation is a much finer sentiment than the necessity of protection from weather. If physical wants strike us the first, love of ornamentation must have followed rather than preceded the necessity of protection. In the realm of food, refinement of taste comes much later. The first desire is to fill the belly with whatever coarse food one might get. Varieties of condiments and confectionary come much later. It is not improbable that the love of ornamentation which we find amongst the barbaric people, totally divorced from clothing, might be a lingering feature. Their

forefathers must have been fully civilized in the latest sense of dressedness, and as they went down in the scale of civilization and forgot the art of wearing, they dwindled into barbaric nakedness keeping only a shadow of ornamentation with them. In all departments of life, beauty is next to necessity in origin. Later on, it may outgrow necessity and linger on as a mark of fashion when the idea of necessity is forsaken. We find fashionable people clothing their bodies, when they do not need clothes for health or climate, or when clothes do them an obvious wrong. Similarly, people are found eating for fashions' sake, when eating does them harm. Fashion is not original, though it lingers longer.

Clothing, therefore, is more a necessity than a fashion. God has given animals and birds natural dresses, such as wool to sheep and oily skin to ducks. But even hairs growing on man's body are more to protect pores than the body from cold or heat. This seeming unkindness of nature is not without its bright aspect. This makes man moveable. He is a denizen of all climates. The four quarters of the globe are his abode. He is a huge human family. In order to foster universal brotherhood, he ought to mix with all kinds of men and adapt himself to every type of climate.

A man who flies from Delhi to Srinagar in a few hours must need a change of dress. This is the functional value of dress in civilization. Therefore, it is that nudisim as an *ism* is the negation of civilization. Civilized people must be social and social people must have dress.

First physical necessity, then, refinement and taste in those physical necessities. This is how our physical wants tend to mental and spiritual development. Sage Kanada defines Dharma or virtue as that which leads through worldly prosperity to spiritual beatitude. In interpreting this aphorism, people ordinarily join *abhuydaya* (अभ्युदय) or wordly prosperity and *nishshreyasa* (निःश्रेयस) or spiritual beatitude by conjunction 'and'. I think differently. The first is the means and the second the end. Spiritual development does not accrue by magic. From the grossest wants of the body up to the most refined development of the spirit, there is a long continuous journey, each preceding step being a means to its immediate successor. Between pure bodily wants and pure spiritual wants there are innumerable intermediary wants: some physical, some physiological, some physio-psychological and some psycho-spiritual, gradually rising higher and higher in spiral columns.



The proper appreciation of this graduation is necessary in understanding the full meaning of culture and allocating proper place to different departments of life in civilization as well as culture.

To come back to the question of dress, from sowing of cotton seed to the finishing touch given to an up-to-date-cut coat, there is a long series of processes all conducive to the spiritual development of man, if the wearer and his agents realize the truth that dress is only a means to an end. The condition given in the last sentence of the preceding para seems to be very very essential, as ignorance of the end means the misuse of the end and is fatally disastrous in the end. All up-to-date dressed are not civilized, nor all civilized or apparently civilized cultured. Consciousness of the end is the most material condition and should not be ignored or belittled. This idea prevails in the verses quoted below :—

(1) Rv. I-26.1.

O Lord of foods, do perform this sacrifice  
of ours wearing clean clothes.

(2) Rv. I-134.4.

१. वसिष्ठा हि मियेध्य वस्त्राण्यूजा पते । सेमं नो अश्वरं यज ॥  
(ऋ० १।२६।१)

(२) तुभ्यमुषासः शुचयः परावति भद्रा वस्त्रा तन्वते दंसु रश्मिषु ।  
(ऋ० १।१३४।४)

For the radiant Dawns in the far-distant  
sky stretch their pretty garments.

- (3) Rv. I-140.1. Cover the Bright one as  
if with clothes.
- (4) Rv. I-152.1. You wear brilliant gar-  
ments.
- (5) Rv. II-14.3. Cover Indra with Soma  
as the naked cover their body with  
clothes.
- (6) Rv. III-39.2. Wearing good white  
garments, this is our old ancestral  
tendency.
- (7) Rv. V-47.6. Mothers weave cloths for  
the son.
- (8) Rv. VI-47.23. I got ten clothes.
- (9) Rv. IX-97.2. Wearing good martial  
cloak.

- (३) वस्त्रेणैव वासया.....(ऋ० १।१४०।१)
- (४) युवं वस्त्राणि पीवसा वसाथे.....(ऋ० १।१५२।१)
- (५)....इन्द्रं सोमैर्गेणुत जूर्न वस्त्रैः (ऋ० २।१४।३।
- (६) भद्रा वस्त्राण्यर्जुना वसाना सेयमस्मे सनजा पित्र्या धीः ॥  
(ऋ० ३।३६।२)
- (७) वस्त्रा पुत्राय मातरो वयन्ति (ऋ० ५।४७।६)
- (८)....दशवस्त्राधिभोजना । (ऋ० ६।४७।२३)
- (९) भद्रा वस्त्रा समन्या वसानः (ऋ० ६।६७।२)

- (10) Rv. IX-97.50. Give us good garments.  
 (11) Rv. X-1.6. Wearing pretty garments.  
 (12) Rv. X-106.1. You weave your actions  
           as weavers weave their clothes.  
 (13) Atharva Veda V-1.3. May people give  
           us garments.  
 (14) Atharva Veda IX-5.25. Five new garments.  
 (15) Atharva Veda XIV-2.41, 42. Bridal  
           dress.  
 (16) Rv. X-26.6. A weaver weaves beautiful  
           garments of sheep's wool.

In this verse, the word 'marmrijat' shows that herein there is a reference not only to the weaving of woollen clothes, but also to clean-washing.

- (१०) अग्नि वस्त्रा सुवसनान्यर्षं (ऋ०६।६७।५०)  
 (११) स तु वस्त्राण्यध पेशनानि वसानः (ऋ०१०।१।६)  
 (१२) तन्वाथे वियो वस्त्रापसेव (ऋ०१०।१०६।१)  
 (१३)...अस्मे वस्त्राणि विश एरयन्ताम् (अथर्व ५।१।३)  
 (१४)....पञ्च नवानि वस्त्रा...(अथर्व ६।५।२५)  
 (१५)...वाधूयं वासो वध्वश्च वस्त्रम् । (अथर्ववेद १४।२।४१, ४२)  
 (१६) वासोवायोऽ वीनामा वासांसि मर्मजत् (ऋग्वेद १०।२६।६)

(17) Yajur Veda. IV. 10. Thou art *nivi*  
(undergarment) as soft as wool.

(18) Atharva Veda VIII-2.16. Whatever  
cloth thou usest as the upper or  
lower garment, let that be auspicious  
to thy body and very soft to touch.

(19) Atharva Veda XIV. 2.51.

May all the hems and borders, all the  
threads that form the web and  
woof,

The garment woven by the bride, be soft  
and pleasant to our touch.

(20) Rv. I-140.9. Upper garment.

(21) Rv. I-140.10. A coat of mail in  
wars.

(१७) सोमस्य नीविरसि । (यजुर्वेद ४।१०)

(१८) यत्ते वासः परिधानं यां नीविं कृणुषे त्वम् ।

शिवं ते तन्वे तत् कृणुः संस्पर्शोऽङ्गुलमस्तु ते ॥ (अथर्ववेद ८।२।१६)

(१९) ये अन्ता यावतीः सिचो ये ओतवो ये च तन्तवः ।

वासो यत् पत्नीभिस्तं तन्नः स्योनमुप स्पृशात् ॥ (अथर्ववेद १४।२।५१)

(२०)...अधीवासं (ऋ० १।१४०।६)

(२१)...वर्मैव युत्सु (ऋ० १।१४०।१०)

- (22) Rv. I-162.16. (Yajur XXV. 39) They spread cloth over the horse as an upper garment.
- (23) Rv. I-122.2. Covering her with a woven cloth.
- (24) Rv. I-25.13. Varuna covers his healthy body with shining coat.
- (25) Rv. IV-53.2. The wise supporter of the Universe, the Lord of all beings spreads so to speak a shining garment (over the world at dawn).
- (26) Rv. IX-86.14. Wearing coat.
- (27) Rv. IX-100.9. Spreads the coat.

I think so many references will do to convince the reader that the society envisaged in the Vedas

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(२२) यदश्वाय वास उपस्तृगन्त्यधीशानं (ऋ० १।१६२।१६, यजुर्वेद २५।२६)

(२३)...स्तरीर्नात्किं व्युतं वसाना...(ऋ० १।१२२।२)

(२४) विभ्रद् द्रापि हिरण्यम्...(ऋ० १।२५।१३)

(२५) दिवो धर्ता भुवनस्य प्रजापतिः पिशंगं द्रापि प्रति मुञ्चते कविः ।  
(ऋ० ४।५३।३)

(२६) द्रापि वसानः...(ऋ० ६।८६।१४)

(२७)...प्रति द्रापिममुञ्चथाः । (ऋ० ६।१००।६)

does not consist of nude beggars or naked barbarians. After the lapse of so many milleniums it is difficult to exactly describe *Vasah* (वासः), *Nivi* (नीविः), *atka* (आत्क) or *drapi* (द्रापि). They seem to be general words like the English word 'coat'. 'Coat' does not connote one particular type of coat. Different people wear different kinds. But it is clear that dress, woven of wool, silk or cotton, soft to touch and shining in colour, is mentioned in the Vedas. There is a mention of horses' garments either in the form of saddle or soft cushion or as a covering to protect them from excessive cold. It seems that brides are asked to weave pretty coats for their consorts. The mention of coats of mail shows that the stage of military dress is much more advanced in the art of weaving cloth.

Seeing a few naked faquirs of India, people think that early Indians did not know the use of cloth or garments. They forget the highly philosophic workings of Indian mind. The life is just like a circle. We begin our life naked, we all, whether civilized or barbarous. Our connection with clothes is but temporary. We die naked. Those who have reached the level of understanding things in their fundamental nature, must learn the value of renunciation and should be able to do with as scanty dress as possible. Most of the

naked faquirs have outgrown that stage when upto-date fashioned dress cheered them. To take a recent example, Mahatma Gandhi used to dress in an up-to-date style in his early days. But later on he rose to spiritual level where external appearance counted very little and he could do with most scanty dress. We must remember that dress has a place in the culture of a pelple, but it is not the essence of culture. The real seed of a plant has many envelopes which protect it from external encroachments, but when it bursts forth in order to bloom itself into a tree , it casts off all the outer gear. The real seed is that innermost something that germinates. All else is a covering which must be cast off.

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## CHAPTER XII

### TRADE AND TRAVEL

What we produce from agriculture and industry must be sent to other men and other places in order to make a full use of our achievements. Therefore it is that according to the social organisation recommended by the Vedas one of the four sections of the society is Vaishya. The duties of a Vaishya cover all the three items, agriculture, art and craft as well as trade. The special name given to a trader Vaishya is Vanik.

In Rg. Veda I-112. 11. we read, “Yabhih sudanu aushijaya vanije dirghashravase madhu kosho aksrat.”\*

Here *Vanije* is in the dative case. It means “for a trader”. There are two adjectives to this substantive; *aushijaya*, meaning very earnest and *dirgha shravase*, well read. For such a trader, treasure sheds sweetness (kosho madhu aksrat). The idea is that if a trader is eager and widely

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\* याभिः सुदानू औशिजाय वणिजे दीर्घश्रवरो मधु कोशो अक्षरत् ।  
कक्षीवन्तं स्तोतारं याभिरावतं ताभिरूषु ऊतिभिरश्विना गतम् ॥  
(ऋ० १।११२।११)



read; he is sure to amass wealth. A common Sanskrita saying is that wealth resides in trade (Vanijye vasati lakshmi).

Athrvā Veda, III-15, 1 is very striking :—

Indramaham vanijam chodayami sa na etu  
pura eta no astu. Nudannaratim paripantlinam  
mrigam sa ishano dhanada astu mahyam\*.

“I urge the merchant-lord to come forward and lead us. After subduing ill-will, highway robber and wild beast, let him be a giver of wealth to me.”

Needless to say that mercantile pursuits need three things :—

1. International good will and cooperation.
2. Internal peace and order.
3. Safe communication through forests etc.

It is always traders that have mostly contributed to the making of land-ways, water-ways and air-ways. It is traders who more than anyone else link a nation with another nation, a country with another country and a tribe with another

\* इन्द्रमहं वणिजं चोदयामि स न ऐतु पुरस्ता नो अस्तु ।

नुदन्नरतिं परिपन्थिनं मृगं स ईशानो धनदा अस्तु मह्यम् ॥

(अथर्ववेद ३।१५।१)

tribe. They contribute mightily to universal brother-hood. Amateur travellers are very few in the world. Invaders do travel, but not to create brotherhood, but to disturb it. Traders strengthen international ties. Theirs are the fairest give-and-take relations. Another verse in the same hymn reads as follows :—

Imam agne sharanim mimriso no yam adhvani-  
nam agama duram.

Shunam no astu prapano vikrayascha prati-  
panah phalinam ma krinotu§.

(Atharva III-15.4)

“O good lord, excuse our obdurance. We have come a long way . Let our sale and barter be prosperous. Let interchange of merchandise enrich me.”

Then we read :—“Prosperous be our ventures and incomings” (Shunam no astu charitam utthitam cha. Atharva III-15.4).

Thus we see that the Vedas hold out a very good impetus for trade. But beauty of the Vedic teachings is that they put a limit to everything.

§ इमामग्ने शरणि मीमृषो नो यमध्वानमगाम दूरम् ।

शुनं नो अस्तु प्रपणो विक्रयश्च प्रतिपणः फलितं मा कृणोतु ।

इदं हव्यं संविदानौ जुषेयां शुनं नो अस्तु चरितमुत्थितं च ॥

(अथर्ववेद ३।१५।४)

The Vanik or trader is a wealth-producing agent of the society and not its blood-sucker. If the human weaknesses of a Vanik carry him too far, he no longer remains a Vanik (वणिक्) but becomes a *pani* (पणि), a condemnatory appellation of an ill-earning trader, a black-marketeer. In the Rg. Veda there are numerous references to the *panis* on whom has been heaped a good deal of condemnation. The 7th verse of hymn 25 of the Fourth Mandala of the Rg. Veda is most strikingly significant.

Na revata panina sakhyam indro asunvata  
sutapah samgrinite. Asya vedah khidati hanti  
nagnam vi sushvaye paktaye kevalo bhut.†

“Soma-loving Indra does not befriend a wealthy and un-charitable niggard (*pani*). He rather destroys the hoardings of such a man and kills him naked. He (Indra) is the friend of only him who cooks food as an offering to sacrifice.

Here there are two epithets used for *pani*. One is *revata* (a hoarder) and the other, *asunvata* (not sacrificing). *Vedah* means hoardings from *Ved* to gain (*Vidlr. labhe*).

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† न रेवता पणिना सख्यमिन्द्रो ऽसुन्वता सुतपाः सं गृणीते ।

आस्य वेदः खिदति हन्ति नग्नं वि सुश्वये पक्तये केवलो भूत् ॥

(ऋग्वेद ४।२५।७)

In Rg. Veda VI-51. 14, we find :—

Jahi nyatrinam panim vriko hi shah.†  
 “Kill the voracious *pani*. He is verily a wolf.”

Rg. VI-53. 3 reads as follows :—

\*Aditsantam chidaghrne pushan danaya  
 chodaya. Paneshchid vi mrada manah.

“O lord, urge towards charity the man who is uncharitable. Soften, kindly, the heart of the *pani* or niggard.”

With the word ‘*pani*’ is connected another word ‘*vala*’. These words often come together. I think that ‘*vala*’ is the head-*pani* or ring-leader of black-marketeers. It is the duty of the king to save the people from such commercial sharks or wolves as the Vedas call them.

Efforts have often been made to identify *panis* with the phoenicians of the Greek history, who were also a very daring sea-faring people. Some learned men insinuate that the Vedic condemnatory language for *pani* is due to their foreign origin. But I think that no geographical or racial meaning is inherent here. To me it appears that it is something like a resentment at the undue and undesirable

† जही न्यत्रिणं पणिं वृको हि षः (ऋग्वेद ६।५१।१४)

\* अदित्सन्तं चिदाघ्रणे पूषन् दानाय चोदय ।

पणेश्चिद्वि म्रदा मनः ॥ (ऋग्वेद ६।५३।३)

methods of the present day capitalism. It is quite possible that the Vedic "*pani*" might have in later times migrated to western countries and changed into 'punic' or 'phoenician'. At any rate, it is clear that the Vedas give sufficient impetus to trade and taking into consideration the main point that trade is after all an instrument of culture, i.e., of all round cultivation of seed-powers of the soul, there should be a limit beyond which the traders are not allowed to go. Trade is a means and not an end, not only for the society at large, but for the traders themselves too. What the society loses in the form of wealth, the trader loses in the form of spiritual development. But how should the trader be made conscious of this loss ? He thinks it a gain. This is his narrow-mindedness. This makes him a *pani* or trader-demon. In Rg. Veda, Mandala X, Sukta 108, we are told that a bitch named *Sarma* (सरमा) is sent to find out the hiding places of *vala* (वल) and *panis* (पणि). Sayana has translated *Sarama* (सरमा) as *devashuni* (देवशुनी) or the bitch of gods. In the Yaska's Nirukta we read "*Sarama Sarasvati*" (सरमा सरस्वती). How is a bitch to be identified with *Sarasvati*, the goddess of knowledge ? Two things are worth noting in this connection. First of all, the word *deva-shuni* (God's bitch) is nowhere

found either in the Rg. Veda or in other Vedas. Bitch-hood has been imposed upon *Sarama* by Hindu mythology. The second point is that *Sarama* is the agent of Brihaspati, known in Hindu literature as the preceptor of gods. Brihaspati was no hunter; nor a detective. To my mind *Sarama* is nothing else than learning, which diving deep into the most inaccessible recesses of ungodly persons can detect their defects and bring them to senses. My presumption is emboldened by *Sayana* himself. In commenting upon Rv. V-45.7 & 8, *Sayana* writes "*Sarama saranashila stutirupa vak*".\* *Sarama* means learning. In Rv. X-108, there is a mention of the efforts that the *Panis* made to win over *Sarama* and bribe her to share the booty on fifty-fifty basis. *Sarama* discards it forthwith and warns the *panis* against the danger that they are courting by not listening to her. We know how capitalist try to win over the learned of the realm by offering them a share in their profits. But by raping learning thus, they expose themselves to utter annihilation. Capitalism is trade raped, and nothing else. This can be cured only by spiritual consciousness followed by spiritual knowledge. This means reference to the end of culture and subordinating

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\*सरमा सरणशीला स्तुतिरूपा वाक् (सायण—ऋ० ५।४५।७-८)

all our means to this end. Materialism cannot kill capitalism. It can be transferred to other agencies. It is easy to kill capitalists. But if you kill them, the next step is that you become capitalists in their stead. Capitalism is there. It has simply changed masters. It is "*Sarcma*" (spiritual learning) deputed by Indra (God) that can subdue *panis* and their *panism*.

This is by way of digression. We allowed ourselves this privilege simply to point to the reader that the current conception of the Vedic teachings is most erroneous and has to be guarded against. In spite of all the efforts so far made by Indologists, the Vedas are still a closed book and most regions are still lying un-explored.

Now we must turn to another point. Trade is inseparably allied with communication. 'Trade' and 'track' have a close affinity. The Sanskrita word *vyapara* comes from the root *pri* to cross (*vitatpara*).

We find in the Rg. Veda word *patha* (Eng. path) at hundreds of places, sometimes used literally and at others metaphorically. Mataphors only enhance the importance of the literal use of a word. This shows that paths or roads are very important in socializing man. We content ourselves with the

mention of only one hymn. (Rg. Veda I-42)\*:—

1. O controller of paths, may the shortest road lead us to our destination. May all danger be away from us. Be our guide.
2. O controller of paths, he who in order to rob us of our belongings and harass, misleads us (saying, go this way etc.), him be pleased to set aside from our way.
3. Please send away from our path, the hostile, guileful robber.
4. Dost thou, through thy functions, overcome the body of any criminal robber, who both directly and indirectly may harm us.
5. O controller of paths, intelligent and enemy subduing, we seek thy same protection, as has always been available to our ancestors.

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\* ऋग्वेद मंडल १, सूक्त ४२:—

- (१) सं पूषन्नध्वनस्तिर व्यंहो त्रिमुचो नपात् । सक्षत्रा देव प्रणस्पुः ॥
- (२) यो नः पूषन्नधो वृको दुःशेव आदिदेशति । अप स्म तं पयो जहि ॥
- (३) अप त्वं परिगन्धिनं मुषीत्राण दुरश्चितम् । दूरमधि स्रुतेरज ॥
- (४) त्वं तस्य द्वायविनोऽवशंसस्य कस्य चित् । पदाभि तिष्ठ तपुषिम् ॥
- (५) आ तत् ते दस्र मनुमः पूषन्नवो वृणीमहे ॥ येन पितृनचोदयः ॥



6. O most fortunate and extremely rich, provide us with wealth salted with charity.
7. O controller of paths, protect us from our deceiver and lead us to a right path. Thou knowest all the means of protection in the way.
8. O controller of paths, lead us to those countries which are well-known for their plentifulness. Let no disease obstruct us in the way. Thou knowest all the means of protection in the way.
9. O controller of communication, be kind to us, make us full, provide us with the needful, give us glory, fill our bellies. Thou knowest the means of protection in the way.
10. We do not resent our controller of communication,

(६) अथा नो विश्वसौभग हिरण्यवासीमत्तम । धनानि सुषणा कृधि ॥

(७) अति नः मश्चतो नय मुगः नः सुपथा कृणु । पूषन्निह क्रतुं विदः ॥

(८) अभि सूयवसं नय न नवज्वारो अश्वने । पूषन्निह क्रतुं विदः ॥

(९) शग्धि पूर्धि प्र यंसि च शिशोहि प्रास्युदरम् । पूषन्निह क्रतुं विदः ॥

(१०) न पूषणं मे शमसि सूतैरभि गृणीमसि । वसूनि दस्ममीमहे ॥

We rather admire him, We seek' him for  
liberality.

Here the following points are quite clear:—

- (a) The roads should be as short as possible.
- (b) The centres of plenty should be duly connected.
- (c) The roads should be safe from highway-men, robbers, swindlers and beasts.
- (d) There should be a regular controlling body appointed by the state to ensure safe and speedy communication.
- (e) People should co-operate with the above body and should not resent its interference, which is meant to safeguard their interests.

We have translated '*Pushan*' as controller of paths. *Pushan* literally means controller or protector. Had we followed mythology, we should have translated it as "god of ways". Griffith has put it simply as '*Pushan*' with capital P as if it is a proper name of some God. In our opinion it is a mistake to thrust mythology on the Vedas. The minister in charge of communication can be safely called '*Pushan*'. At any rate, whether we are right or wrong at this point, even mythological interpretation is sufficient to prove the importance of the ways of communication in the Vedic society.

Let us now turn attention to waterways and airways. There are so many references to sea-voyage in the Vedas that sometimes Indologists have been led to think that the India of the Vedic times must have been a sea-girdled small island like England or Japan. Prof. A. C. Dasa's theory is that in ancient days, the whole of Rajputana was a sea and that there was hardly any place in India which might be very far from the sea. It is difficult to agree with the learned professor, as the reference to land routes is also equally frequent. The Rishis of old believed that the Vedic teachings have a universal reference, with no geographical or racial limitation. This is not the place to discuss this point. In the Rg. Veda we find that what Pushan is for land routes, so Varuna is for waterways and Savita for airways and sometimes Varuna is a generic term for all. Following verses\* are worth-noting :—

1. Rg I-25.7.

Veda Yo vinam padam antariksenā patatām.  
Veda navah samudriyah.

“ That Varuna knows the place of aeroplanes descending from the sky. He knows the boats of the sea.”

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\* (१) वेदा यो वीनां पदमन्तरिक्षेण पतताम् । वेद नावः समुद्रियः ॥  
(ऋग्वेद १।२५।७)

*Vinam* has often been translated as birds. The reader might be astonished at our interpreting it as aeroplanes. 'Vinam' does mean "birds". But the last part of the verse mentions 'boats' and not "fishes of the sea". 'Birds' would rather correspond with "fishes" than with "boats". In order to maintain poetic symmetry, it is necessary to translate *Vinam* as vehicles of the sky in striking correspondence with the "boats of the sea". 'Vinam' may be equivocal, but not *navah*, which should determine the univocality of *vinam*.

(2) Rg. Veda I-48.3.

Samudre na shravasya vah.

"like wealth-seeking merchants in the sea".

Here is a reference to merchant-ships.

(3) Rg. Veda I-56.2

Samudram na sancharane sanisyavah.

"like wealth-seeking merchants of the sea."

(almost the same as no. 2)

(२).....समुद्रे न श्रवस्यवः ॥ (ऋ० १।४८।३)

(३).....समुद्रं न संचरणे रानिष्यवः ॥ (ऋ० १।५६।२)

## (4) Rg. Veda I-116.3.

Naubhi-rātmanvatibhi-rantariksh-pru-  
dbhi-rapodakabhih.

“By means of boats, self-owned, moving in the sky, moving over the surface of water.”

Here there are two significant adjectives of *naubhih* (boats), one *antarikshaprud* (अन्तरिक्षप्रुद) moving in the sky ; the other *apodaka* (अपोदक) gliding over water. Should we not take it that the boats were such as could move in the sky as well as over the surface of water ?

## (5) Rg. Veda I-116.३.

.....samudre.....  
shataritram navam.

“A hundred-oared ship in the sea.

## (6) Yajur Veda X.19.

Navash-charanti.

“Ships glide.”

## (7) Yajur Veda XX-1.6.

Daivim Navam.

“Divine ship.”

(४).....नौभिरात्मन्वतीभिरन्तरिक्षप्रुद्धिरपोदकाभिः। (ऋ० १।११६।३)

(५).....समुद्रे.....गत्तारित्रां नावम्...(ऋ० १।११६।५)

(६).....नावश्चरन्ति (यजुर्वेद १०।१६)

(७).....दैवीं नावम्...(यजुर्वेद २।१६)

- (8) Yajur Veda. XXI-7.  
Sunavam aruheyam  
“ May I board a good ship.”
- (9) Atharva Veda. V-4.5.  
Navo hiranyayih,  
“ There were golden ships.
- (10) Atharva Veda. II. 36.5.  
Navam aroha,  
“ Board the ship. ”
- (11) Atharva Veda XII. 2.48.  
Arohata.....navam.  
“ Board the ship. ”

The metaphorical use of a boat or ship is so common in the Vedic literature that even ordinary men compare the wordly life with an ocean which has to be crossed in the boat of Dharma to reach the abode of bliss. The use of nautical terms cannot but show that the users of the terms were sea-faring.

- (८).....सुनावमारुहेयम्... (यजुर्वेद २१।७)  
(९).....नावो हिरण्ययीः... (अथर्ववेद ५।४।५)  
(१०).....नावमारोह... (अथर्ववेद २।३६।५)  
(११).....आरोहत...नावम्... (अथर्ववेद १२।२।४८)

Now let us take, in the end, the question of airways. Aeroplanes are a most recent achievement of the modern scientific world and its reference in ancient literature, however clear, cannot but rouse a feeling of jealousy in the minds of moderners. It is natural. We do not mean to deprive the scientists of the unique credit which they have legitimately earned. But will it be scientifically fair, if we shut our eyes against clear statements ?

We have above mentioned Rg. Veda I-25.2 wherein the word “*Vinam*” occurs. We have also pointed out the reasons why we have translated it as aeroplanes. Some persons may dispute with us as regards the validity of our interpretation. But we give below two verses with their literal translation :—

1 . Rg. Veda I-35.11\*

Ye te panthah savitah purvyaso arenavah sukrta  
antarikshe, Tebhir no adya pathibhih, sugebhi  
raksa cha no adhi cha bruhi deva.

“ Whatever ways, O God Savita, are there in the  
sky, old, dustless and well-laid ; by those very

\* (१) ये ते पन्थाः सवितः पूर्व्यासो ऽ रेणवः सुकृता अन्तरिक्षे ।

तेभिर्नो अद्यपथिभिः सुगेभी रक्षा च नो अधि च ब्रूहि देव ॥

(ऋग्वेद १।३५।११)

paths, today, which are easy to travel, protect us and guide us.”

Airways are, no doubt, dustless. They are in the sky. They are easy for gliding.

## 2. Atharva Veda III. 15.2.†

Ye panthano bahavo devayana antara  
dyava prithivi sancharanti ; te ma jushantam  
payasa ghritena yatha kṛitvadhanam aharani.

“Whichever paths may godly vehicles traverse between the earth and the sky, let them be provided with milk and butter, so that I may earn wealth through trade.”

Both these verses we have translated literally word by word, without stretching any meaning what-so-ever. It is difficult to conclude otherwise than by admitting that ancient books refer to airways. What kinds of aeroplanes they were, it is difficult to say. Mythology is so mixed up with factual literature, that due sifting of chaff from the grain is difficult. But incredulity is as bad as credulity. In Sanskrita dramas we read of sage Narada descending from above in a

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† (२) ये पन्थानां बहवो देवयाना अन्तरा द्यावापृथिवी संचरन्ति । ते मा जुषन्तां पयसा घृतेन यथा क्रीत्वा धनमाहराणि ॥ (अथर्ववेद ३।१५।२)



plane. Poetic imagination might have enveloped the facts with mystery. It is said that Rama came from Lanka in a plane named Pushpaka. That too might have been coated with imaginary qualities. Even today a poet describing a plane will not be as accurate as a mechanic. Poets are after all poets. But there is nothing incredible in the two Vedic verses, we have ventured to quote above.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### THE ART OF BUILDING HOUSES

The first born men must have lived at least for some time in caves, as obviously it must have taken sometime to develop the art of building houses. But it does not necessarily mean that cave-dwellers were savages. House-building is an expression of civilization, but only an expression. Culture and civilization are more intrinsic. Highly developed saints in India and other countries have lived a simpler life and dispensed with many things which are counted among necessities by civilized people. The history of the art and science of house-building is not available in chronological order. But the reference of houses in the Veda is marvellously excellent. Svami Dayananda in his book of rituals, the *Sanskara Vidhi*, has written a small Chapter on house-building mainly deriving his ideas from the Vedas. The following two verses\* which he has quoted in the very beginning are worth-noting :—

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- \* (१) उपमितां प्रतिमितामथो परिमितामुत ।  
शालाया विश्ववाराया नद्धानि विचूतामसि ॥  
(२) हविर्धानमग्निशाल पत्नीनां सदन सदः ।  
सदो देवानामसि देवि शाले ॥ (अथर्ववेद काण्ड ६, सूक्त ३, मंत्र १, ७)

“ We lay the strong foundation of a house which is well-ventilated (विश्ववारायाः), beautiful (उपनि) with parts symmetrically corresponding to each other (प्रतिनि) and measured (परिनि) or enclosed all round.” “ Its main four parts are store-houses (हविर्गान्), kitchen (अग्निशाला), harem or ladies’ apartment (पत्नीनां सदनं) and drawing room (देवानांसदः).

The whole hymn (Atharva Veda IX.3) is a beautiful description of a dwelling-house which shows how developed is the Vedic idea of a dwelling house :—

“ The house may be two-sided, four-sided, six-sided, eight-sided or even ten-sided. The house is the peace-giver to mind. I take shelter in it as fire in its womb.”

Here all types of houses are mentioned from an humble hut to a large mansion. At one place the house is compared with a beautiful bride\* as it is the place where one finds happiness. (Atharva IX.3.24). In his book of rituals, Parasakara calls the house as the centre of the world.

\* (१) या द्विपक्षा चतुष्पक्षा षट्पक्षा या निमीयते । अष्टापक्षां दशपक्षां शालां मानस्य पत्नीमग्निगर्भं इवा शये । (अथर्व १।३।२१)

(२) वधूमिव त्वा शाले यत्र कामं भवामसि । (अथर्व १।३।२४)

(Bhuvanasya nabhih). In fact the house is the centre of the house-holders' universe. Home, sweet home ; there is no place like home. My house is the centre of my universe, as it is the pivot on which revolve my ideas.

In the Rg. Veda, the 54th hymn of Book VII is entirely devoted to house-building. It is addressed to Vastoshpati ( वास्तोष्पति ) or Chief architect.†

§(1) “ O great builder ! impart this satisfaction to us that thou art a giver of an abode free of diseases to us. Kindly do as I request you. Let thee bring happiness to our bipeds and quadrupeds.

(2) O delight giving builder, add to our wealth by being helpful to our cows and horses. Through thy kindness, let us live in hygienic conditions to a good old age. Be kind to us as a father to his son.

† (१) वास्तोष्पते प्रतिजानीह्यस्मान्

§ (१) वास्तोष्पते प्रति जानीह्यस्मान्स्त्वावेशो अन्नमीवो भवानः ।  
यत्त्वे महे प्रति तन्नो जुषस्व शं नो भव द्विपदे शं चतुष्पदे ॥

(२) वास्तोष्पते प्रतरणो न एधि गयस्फानो गोभिरश्वेभिरिन्द्रो ।  
अजरासरते सहये स्याम पितेव पुत्रान् प्रति नो जुषस्व ।

- (3) O builder, make us such a house that we may live in all sorts of comforts and enrich ourselves. Let happiness come to us. Let us ever be blessed with auspicious things."

In Paraskara, we come across three classes of masons or builders *Karta* ( कर्ता ), *Vikarta* ( विकर्ता ) and *Vishvakarma* ( विश्वकर्मा ). As the commentaries of this treatise on rituals have explained the texts rather mysteriously, their connotations are not very clear. But the context shows that there were three classes of engineers or builders. Then again, we find a mention of three other officers, *dhata* ( धाता ), *vidhata* ( विधाता ) and *nidhinam pati* ( निधीना पति ). These three are connected with house-building, in what way it is difficult to say. If there were municipalities in those days, they were perhaps municipal officers, whose aid had to be sought in building a good house.

In the Rg. Veda, there is a verse which typically describes the blessings of a house (I-154.6).

(३) वास्तोष्पते शग्मया संसदा ते सक्षीमहि रण्वया गातुमत्या ।

पाहि क्षेम उत योगे वरं नो यूयं पात स्वरितभिः सदा नः ॥

(ऋग्वेद ७।५४।१-३)

\*“ O husband and wife (householders), we design for your habitation a house wherein sun-rays come plentifully. Here in such a well-ventilated house can dawn upon you the divine light whereby you may realize the supermost stage of God.”

In this mantra, there is a hint that physical openness leads to spiritual openness too. A good well-ventilated and hygienically built house is the fittest abode for godly and spiritually advanced persons. In the Vedas, we frequently come across two words for a house, one is ‘*grīha*’ ( गृह ), which comes from the root ‘*graha*’ ( ग्रह ) to grasp and the other *dama* ( दम ) which comes from the root *dam* ( दम् ) to regulate. This latter ‘*dama*’, though obsolete in modern Sanskrita, migrated westward and took the shape of Latin dom (cf. Doma, domestic etc.). The beauty of the Vedic teaching is that in the environments of material prosperity, the spiritual side is never ignored. The house is not only an enclosure of bricks and stones, but a place where the members of the family regulate their habits and advance step by step, towards the spiritual goal of life. So

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\*ता वां वास्तून् युष्मसि गमध्वं यत्र गावो भूरिशृङ्गा अयासः ।

अत्राह तदुर्गायस्य वृष्णः परमं पदमव भाति भूरि ॥

(ऋग्वेद १।१५४।६)

much about common people's dwellings. For kings and rulers there is a mention of very big houses with thousands of pillars (vide Rg. Veda II-41.5). \* In V-62.6-7, we come across iron-pillared and gold-decorated houses glittering in the sky.

Houses and palaces lead to the idea of big and fortified cities. In the Rg. Veda VII-3.7 and VII-15.14, we read of *Ayasi puh* (आयसी पूः) or iron-fortified towns.

This gives a lie direct to the suggestion often made that the Vedas are the songs of shepherds sung in a society of very primitive type.

\* (१) राजानावनभिद्रुहा ध्रुवे सदस्युत्तमे । सहस्रं स्थूणं आमाने ॥  
(ऋग्वेद २।४।१५)

“Both kings who never injure ough-seat them in their supremest home,

The thousand pillared, firmly based. (Griffith).

(२) अक्रवृहन्ता मुकुते परस्पा यं त्रासथे वरुणेऽन्दन्तः ।

राजाना क्षत्रमहृणीयमाना सहस्रस्थूणं विभृयः सह द्वौ । (ऋ० १।६२।६)

With hands that shed no blood, guarding the pious, whom, Varuna, ye save amid oblations.

Ye, Twain, together, Kings of willing spirit, uphold dominion based on thousand pillars.

(३) हिरण्यनिर्णिगणयो अस्य स्थूणा वि आजते दिव्यश्वाजनीव ।

भद्रे क्षेत्रे निमिता तिन्विले वा सनेम मध्वो अभिगत्यस्य ॥ (ऋ० १।६२।७)

Adorned with gold, its columns are of iron : in heaven it glitters like a whip for horses ;

Or stablished on a field deep-soiled and fruitful, So may we share the meath that loads your car-seat. (Griffith).

## CHAPTER XIV

### CASTES, CLASSES AND COMMUNALISM

The present Hindu Society is much maligned for its caste-system. There was a time when it was a system, based on rationalistic principles. Then it was called Varna-system. Now there is no system. Merely a conventional classification of the society into an arbitrary number of castes and sub-castes prevails which receives no sanction what-so-ever from the Vedas. Arbitrary classification must lead to chaos.

We have said elsewhere that different men have different potentialities, different tendencies, different aspirations and different modes of living. There is no Procrustes' bed to reduce them to uniform size. Our starting points are different. And we need some differentiation in the circles of our work. We cannot start at the same point and even going along the same paths, we cannot keep the same speed. Yet we are so placed in our human society that while keeping our own speed, we must so behave that our conduct may be conducive to the good of the whole society.



Therefore, it is that the Vedas have enjoined four-fold classification of man. In the Yajur Veda, we read : “ When they made men (human society), how did they divide it ? What was its mouth, what its arms, what thighs and what feet ? Brahmana was its mouth, Kshatriya its arms, Vaishya its thighs and Shudras its feet.”

\*(Yajur Veda XXXI. 10, 11 or Rg. Veda X-90·11,12)

A great misconception about this Varna system is about the meaning of the word Varna itself. Varna usually means ‘colour’ and it is supposed that the classification of the society into Varnas was based upon colour. It is said that the Aryans were a fair-coloured people and they looked down upon and enslaved the dark-skinned aborigines of India, called afterwards Shudras. Had it been so, there should have been two divisions of society, one fair and the other dark. The division of a body into mouth, arms, thighs and feet can never be based upon colour. The colour of different limbs of the body does not change as we go down

\*(१) यत् पुरुषं वदधुः कतिधा व्यकल्पयन् ।

मुखं किमस्य कौ बाहू का ऊरु पादा उच्येते ॥

(२) ब्रह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः ।

ऊरुतदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥ (ऋ० १०।१६०।११-१२)

from head to foot. The head may be black ; but the foot is always of the same colour as the rest of the body. Hence it is obvious that the colour theory is the ingenuity of those people who are colour-minded. In the Vedic terminology the word '*Varna*' comes from the Sanskrita root '*Vri*' 'to choose'. What is chosen is *Varna*. We can roughly compare it with 'profession' (what is professed), or occupation (what occupies). The theory of occupations is based upon two facts :—First, the society needs many things, which no one man can perform efficiently. Secondly, every man has some peculiar tendencies and if left free, he follows his own tendencies. Nature has so designed things that every man can do something in obedience to his own tendencies, which may fulfil the need of the society. Society leaves every man free to choose his own line of work, though it does not tolerate his idleness. The needs of the society have been broadly divided into three classes,

- (a) The satisfaction of our physical wants.
- (b) The protection from undue encroachment of others.
- (c) The fulfilment of intellectual and spiritual cravings.

Every man severally and the society jointly need these three things, but no one man can produce all the three efficiently. Hence the division of labour. The custom in the Vedic times was that whenever a man reached the age of maturity and was of sound mind, he was asked to choose one particular work for himself. Would he like to contribute towards the material prosperity of the society? Will he grow food, tend cattle, weave cloth, follow some craft, or be an agent to carry things from the place of their production to the place where they are needed. If he does so, he is called a Vaishya, a producer or distributor of wealth. If he loves power and glory, he is free to choose the work of protecting society from the internal disturbances or external inroads. He is, then, called a Kshatriya or protector. (This is the original derivative meaning of the word *Kshatriya*,—one who protects from harm. *Kshataḥ trayate iti*). If his tastes are still finer, he can choose for himself the task of increasing the wealth of knowledge (in place of wealth of corn or money). He is, then, called a Brahmana or a learned man. If a man is so low in intellect, that he cannot choose anything for himself, he cannot be allowed to lead an idle life. Idleness is dangerous to society. The society compels him

to do some work mechanically at the bidding of those who can choose and guide. He is a Shudra or unfortunate. This misfortune of belonging to the lowest class has not been thrust upon him. He is not a Shudra because the society compelled him to be so. He is a Shudra because he could not, on account of his own weakness or idleness, choose for himself a respectable place. Still the society does not discard him. He is a member of the society. The society, of course, does one thing. It does not ignore him or allow him to remain an idler or parasite. In doing so, the society does to itself and to him a great good. By coming into contact with higher people he learns to get their aspirations. I think that is the most fair that a society can think of. It is not separatism, but collaboration.

The analogy of the four limbs of the body which the Yajur Veda introduces and better than which has not been thought of in later times, is very significant. A head is a head only so long as it functions as head, i.e., it leads the whole body and safeguards the interests of every member of the body. A head cut off from the body, is no head at all as far as its functions are concerned. Similarly, no Brahmana is a Brahmana if he ceases to be the trustee of the interests of the whole

body. The acquisition of knowledge to be achieved by the head is not for itself but for the whole body. The eye sees that the foot may not falter. The ear hears that the hand may not err. Thus separatism is not at all suggested by the analogy. The present class differences between the Brahmana, the Kshattriya, the Vaishya and the Shudra are based not upon the Vedic teachings but upon ignorance.

There is one more point which the close study of the Vedic literature reveals. We mostly find the mention of the duties of the four Varnas and not of their privileges. If there is any mention of them, it is only by the way, just as in a present administrative book, you will read an elaborate mention of the duties of a governor, his personal emoluments finding only a casual mention in some account books. Those who think that the Vedic culture is Brahmana-ridden are as mistaken as those who think that the body is eye-ridden or ear-ridden, or brain-ridden. It is stated that a Brahmana should learn, should teach, should perform sacrifices, should help others in the performance of sacrifices, should give in charity and also receive in charity. The privilege last mentioned comes last in importance too. Nay,

it is stated at most places that a Brahmana should not be covetous even in matters of receiving charity. It is the mouth that eats. But no mouth eats for itself. The main object is to sustain the body. Similarly, a Brahmana does accept a gift, but no true Brahmana would accept it for his own personal self. It has clearly been stated, that if he is covetous, he falls down from his status. He is *patita* (पतित), fallen-down or cast-out. The same thing holds good in others' cases. A Kshatriya must protect himself and the remaining three. If he does not, he loses his status. To be a Brahmana is not to feed fat upon the charity of others. It is the arduous task of taking upon one self the responsibility of guiding the world by his example of self-sacrifice. He must be a very bad Director of Public Instruction, and surely not worth his salt, in whose regime a country is mostly ignorant and uneducated. Similarly, if a society is mostly illiterate and uneducated, as the Hindu society is at present, it shows that either there are no Brahmanas at all, or if they are, they are hypocrits. Teachers with no proper teaching and guides with no proper guidance are a farce. Similarly, what is the significance of a governing or Kshatriya class, if no men's life or property or honour is safe ? According to the Vedic

injunctions, the Vaishyas are the producers of wealth, distributors of wealth, keepers of wealth and the sustainers of the whole society by means of wealth. They are not the monopolizers of wealth, nor its sole consumers. In the Chapter on Trade (Chapter XII) we clearly showed how Rg. Veda denounces *panis* or trade-wolves who among wealth at the expense of the society.

(Vide Rg. Veda VI-51.14, VI-53.3)

The verses of the Rg. Veda (X-90. 11, 12) and the Yajur Veda (XXXI. 10, 11) quoted in the beginning of the present Chapter show clearly that the analogy of the four limbs of the body is based upon the functional value of the members of the society and not upon their births. When no importance is attached to the birth of a man and no man is forced to inherit the profession of his ancestors, caste is altogether out of question in the Vedic sociology. The present Hindu caste-system is anti-vedic and is in the process of decay. *Roti* (bread) and *Beti* (daughter) which meant hitherto dining and marrying in one's own caste are gradually disappearing. Interdining is a common feature of this age and inter-marriage is gradually coming into vogue. Thus caste ties are getting loose. They must, as they are anti-

vedic. The Rg. Veda (IX-11.2) envisages a family in which different members follow different occupations. Such a family belongs to no caste. The Varnas or classes mentioned in the Vedic literature are by no means air-tight compartments. Their utility is only for the time-being. If a family has four members, one a priest, another a soldier, the third a weaver, the fourth a doctor, they each will mingle with the members of their own trade in some part of the day, at some particular place, for the execution of their business. But they will meet at home at night. Their class-interests are limited. So is the case with the Vedic Varnas. And as each class has a functional value, the class-struggle is out of question. We do find mention in the Vedas of a struggle between righteous and unrighteous persons, but it is quite different from the class-struggle mentioned in the books of communism and socialism of the present age.

The ancient Aryans were imbued with the spirit of real socialism or communism. But they know well the limitations of these expressions. As far as the opportunities of development are concerned, they maintained perfect equality. No body was debarred from progressing. The society did not



obstruct anybody. All avenues of life were open. Thus the society was socialistic. The well-known communistic dictum, "from everybody according to his capacity and to everybody according to his needs" was faithfully observed in the cases of three important Ashramas or stages of life. Just as in a family, we expect from every child work according to his capacity, and we give to every child according to his needs, all Brahmacharins (or student-class) were given all they needed—food, clothes, books etc. All students, whether born in rich or poor family were treated alike. They had no property-mentality. They were communistic. Then again the Vanaprasthins or foresters and Sanyasins or renunciants too got all they wanted, gratis. They did the best that they could. The Grihasthas or householders were treated differently. Communism, as it is understood these days, the communism of Karl Marx and Lenin, does not suit householders. They must have incentive to work. "From every men according to his capacity" is a charming formula, but most difficult. In the case of gross labour, it may, to a certain extent, be possible to judge what a man can do. You can say what amount of water a particular man can draw and what amount of wood, a particular man can hew.

But there are other types of work also which need voluntary efforts. How can you judge inner workings of a will? The Soviet in Russia, when revolutionising the Russian Society in 1917 did not anticipate the difficulty. Those were the days of blind zeal. Every thing was swept away before the flood of frenzy. Efforts were made to make all stomachs uniform. That was awkward and unpleasant but not impossible. "In the early days of the Soviet Republic, the differences of income among Soviet workers, on the basis of work rendered, were comparatively slight."

But it was difficult to ensure the uniformity of hands. As the years went on, Soviet leaders became increasingly dissatisfied with the results obtained and began to advocate methods of compensation more directly related to the productivity of the individual workers. In 1924, the Sixth Trade Union Congress declared that in order to increase the personal intensity of labour, an extensive application of stimulative forms of wages is necessary. In 1931, Stalin declared, "In a host of businesses the wage scale makes practically no distinction between the skilled and the unskilled, workman has no interest in making himself skilled; he has no incentive to improve himself." This means a revolutionizing change in the above

formula, which in its changed form should be "from each according to his ability, to each according to his deeds." In the Varna-system of the ancient Vedic socialism, there is one thing striking. The Brahmana, the Kshatriya and the Shudra are not intended to be propertied classes. If they have any minima of property, they are not according to the service done to the society. The contribution of the Brahmana to the society in the form of knowledge is remarkably invaluable. What physical belongings can be at par with knowledge? How can a society fully pay for the debt the society received from a Brahmana, or spiritual leader? Even a secular scientist cannot be fully repaid for the benefits which the society derives from his scientific researches. Then, again, the Brahmana has been enjoined to court voluntary poverty to avoid the life of pomp and ease. It is un-Brahmana-like to own palatial buildings or large property. Such a thing makes the Brahmana fall in the eye of the society. It is a recognized mark of his fall. Thus he does the maximum and needs the minimum. This law is enforced not by the legislation of the realm, but by the inner workings of spiritual craving. The materialistic philosophy of Karl Marx, Hegel or Lenin cannot ensure this. Similarly, the Kshatriya or

ruling class functions as protectors. They should keep peace and order. They should punish evil-doers and ensure full liberty to the virtuous. They should not hold property. They must be state people, enjoying all that they need, as long as they serve the state. The Vedic society does not envisage the nationalization of all trade and industry in the sense in which it is meant today. The nationalization of industry means that the state should be converted into an industrious or commercial concern and our governors be dwindled into traders. Who will then be left to punish trade iniquities? Just as individuals can be iniquitous, so can a body of traders or industrialists. And if these latter are governors too, there is none to check the evils. Our governors will naturally enjoy some privileges which no democracy could check. And if the argument is brought to its logical extremities, and all industries are nationalized, the trading instinct of individuals will be crushed and the society will suffer in the long run. Smuggling of functions must result into this evil. Therefore, it is necessary that the Kshatriya should have no hand in trade or industry. They, though not richest, should wield power over the rich and should check them from going beyond their limits. I give two exam-

ples. The British Government in India had its hand in two things, one opium, which was an absolute monopoly and the other excise which is controlled by taxation. Both were the sources of income and therefore, moral side of the question was always pushed back by financial considerations. It is natural, you cannot check it. We generally see that whenever circumstances compel a government to exercise artificial control over food or cloth, the government has to employ a host of clerks or inspectors to carry out the instructions. In a few days these employees become interested and even when public welfare needs abolition of the control, these employees for reasons of self-interest, obstruct the abolition directly or indirectly. The old Vedic polity advised Kshatriyas to rise above monetary considerations. *Yasha* or prestige they valued much above money. A judge getting three or four thousand rupees a month has to punish a multi-millionaire. How can he do it unless he is above money-considerations ? Therefore, it is that the money-producing class should be separate from and under the governing class. Communism of Karl Marx, Lenin or Stalin aims at crushing capitalists. It is not a difficult thing. But it can never crush *Capitalism*. To send a capitalist to gallows is not

equivalent to kill capitalism. Russia, the only country which boasts of its communistic achievements has miserably failed in ensuring even well-balanced socialism. Its achievements in the twenties and thirties of the present century were not in the form of "*democratic socialism*" but of "*a communistic dictatorship*" with government ownership. And what have these achievements cost ? The greatest casualty has been that of honest dealings. The masses were excited to revolution. Capitalism could not be crashed without revolution and no revolution was possible without sabotage. This process of sabotaging has been preached and practised for about a century with different degrees of force and success. In the last three decades, the Russians have been preaching it at the top of their voice. Their emissaries are found in all countries and they are working there as fifth-columnists. Sabotage is their method . We can understand a revolution against a foreign domination. But can you imagine the baneful effects of a century old habit of sabotaging which masses can acquire ? Whatever be the justification of such a preaching, the reasons which justify such actions are short-lived but habit once formed does not disappear easily. National habits persist doggedly. Our communist

theorists do not "take sufficiently into account that the love of power might be as strong a motive and as great a source of injustice, as love of money, and that under a system of public ownership those in control of the government might seek to continue for long periods to exercise their power to their own advantage over both industry and the state machinery. In private industry, as Berle and Means have pointed out, the directors of large corporations own but a small per cent. of the stock. And yet they are the controlling group and are constantly seeking the maintenance and strengthening of their power. So in public industry, as Bertrand Russel maintains, "those who control economic power can, without owning, have palatial residences, the use of the best cars, a princely entertainment allowance, holidays at the public expense in official holiday resorts and so on and so on. And why, he asks, "should they have any more concern for the ordinary worker than those in control have now ?" (vide *Social Economic Movements* by Laidler p. 451)

Thus we see that communistic panacea is more deadly than the disease itself. Heimenn quotes Bukharin, when official spokesman of the Soviets, as estimating that the Russian dictatorship would be needed for another two or three generations.

“If one adds the past years of this dictatorship to this calculation, the total period is about a century, a period approximating the whole duration of Western capitalism until the (first) World War.”

(Vide Eduard Heimann in *Communism, Fascism or Democracy*, 141-3).

What can remedy these evils ? Russel suggests that the only remedy is “a democracy more thoroughgoing, more carefully safe-guarded against official tyranny, and with more deliberate provision for freedom of propaganda than any purely political democracy that has ever existed.” (Vide Russell’s *Power, A New Social Analysis*, pp. 302-3)

Here is a frank confession of the weakness of “purely political democracy.” Really speaking, the fault is not of this or that form of government. It is all due to the materialistic outlook of life. The four Varnas of the Vedic times were based not on extrinsic control of the state only, but upon intrinsic importance of spiritual back-ground. Force had its place, but only secondarily, to check temporary infirmities of human mind. The real motive came from within. Everybody while busy in material engagements was conscious of his spiritual needs and controlled himself from falling prey to many temptations. Even evil-doers thought that they were evil-doers. This feeling pu



a limit to their ill conduct. Now under materialistic atmosphere the case is quite different. The distinction between vice and virtue having vanished, people do wrong and exult. Ends justify means and even ends are lost sight of under the pressure of temptations. The vicious process is slow and imperceptible. But in course of time, it succeeds in producing habits which are indelible. Take for instance the question of killing. 'Do not kill' is a general principle. 'Kill the mortal foe' is the first exception. Then widens the definition of "mortal foe", and even slight provocation is regarded enough to justify killing. At first animals are slaughtered for dire necessity, then for pastime, then as a matter of course. There are tribes of men which have no regard for life whether of men or of lower animals. Similarly, the virtues of truth and honesty. Love and war justify untruths. Modern world has added 'elections' also to the list. The process of dilution once commenced is difficult to be stopped. Some similar things are taking place in case of Communism and Socialism also. The originators of these 'isms' began with good motive. They were selfless personages. They had the well-being of humanity at heart. But they gave support to wrong theories and set the world going on a wrong path.

The exponents of these theories can equally say that even the Vedic Varna system, though perhaps pure in origin, could not keep up its pristine purity and got corrupted into present horrible caste-distinctions of the Hindu Society. It can also be said that outside India, the system got abolished very soon and the world was saved the miserable decay of the Hindu society. We do admit the force of the argument, but not totally. The deterioration did take place. No human institution is a proof against deterioration. The rigidity of the caste-system has done immense harm to the Hindu society. But there are two things. First of all, the loss caused by the absence of the Vedic Varna Dharma either in India or elsewhere has not been made up by any other substitute. Secondly, even the deteriorated Hindu Society with one thousand and one evils has stood social cataclysms better than any other ex-Indian system. In fact, the world outside India has had no system at all. A close study of the history of other nations, European, Asian, African or American, shows that they have been so to speak, floating aimlessly for ages, like a ship cut out of its moorings. It is not our intention to defend caste-system. Far from it. We are eager to cure the evil. But the remedy which is coming from the West is not free from danger.

The history of communistic Russia from 1917 to 1948 clearly shows that the originators misjudged their theories from stage to stage and the revolution which followed the Russian regicide in 1917 was more due to the evils of the Russian society than to the merits of its substitute there. The path which communism has taken so far is not a straight line. It turns and turns and turns, till it assumes an almost circle and God knows where it will end. India is slowly becoming communistic. The creed is enticing young people. But the motive with which it began in the forties of the last century is no longer there. The good has vanished. The evil remains. Materialism is stalking with pride. In olden days, selfishness was a weakness. Now it is a strength. Old diseases are lingering. New diseases are arising. The cure applied is assuming threatening proportions and even the diseased life of the patient is in danger. The only remedy is to give the Vedic Culture back-ground to our sociology, to patiently study the Vedic polity and to adjust it to our present requirements.

## CHAPTER XV

### FAMILY

Family is a starting unit of the Vedic Sociology. It forms a link between the individual and the society. Svami Dayanand in his book of rituals called the *Sanskara Vidhi* has quoted the following verses from the Atharva Veda\* in connection with the duties of the members of a family :—

1. I make you possessors of heart and brain. I make you free from malice. One should behave with another as a cow behaves with her just-born calf.

2. Let the son follow the father in his vows. Let him be one-minded with his mother. Let the wife talk with her husband sweetly and lovingly.

3. Let no brother cherish ill-will against his brother; nor a sister against her sister. Pursuing uniform ideals let them have affectionate talk.

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\* (१) सहृदयं सामनस्यमद्विद्वेषं कृणामि यः ।

अन्यो अन्यमहि हर्षेण वत्सं जातमिवाध्या ॥

(२) अनुव्रतः पितुः पुत्रो मात्रा भवतु संमनाः ।

जाया पत्ये मधुमतीं वाचं वदतु शन्तिवाम् ॥

(३) मा भ्राता भ्रातरं द्विषन् मा स्वसारभुत स्वसा । सम्यञ्चः

सुव्रता भत्वा दाचं वदत भद्रया ॥

4. I fix that principle of life to be pursued in your family, whereby learned people might not dis-unite nor entertain ill-will against each other. Let it be an eye-opener to people.

5. Do not be disunited. Keep your position or respect. Be cautious in your dealings. Increase each others' prosperity, move harmoniously like the spokes of a wheel. Move on in your life speaking sweetly with one another. I mean you to be co-working and one-minded.

6. Drink together and eat together. I unite you together. Just as spokes of a wheel revolve round the same centre, similarly, you should combine round the same household fire (worship together).

7. I mean you all to be co-working, one-minded having same ideals, and united in efforts. Like

(४) येन देवा न विद्यन्ति नो च विद्विषन्ते मियः । तत् कृष्णो ब्रह्म वो गृहे संज्ञानं पुरुषेभ्यः ॥

(५) ज्यायस्वन्तद्विचित्तिनो मा वि यौष्ट संराधयन्तः सधुरादचरन्तः ।  
अन्यो अन्यस्मै वत्सु वदन्त एन सध्रीचीनान् वः संमनसस्त्रुणोमि ॥

(६) समानी प्रैषा सह वो ऽ न्नभागः समाने योक्त्रे सह वो युनज्भि ।  
सम्प्रञ्चोऽ ग्निं सपर्यतारा नाभिमिवाभितः ॥

(७) सध्रीचीनान् वः संमनसस्त्रुणोम्येकशुष्टीन् त्सवननेन सर्वान् ।  
देवा इवामृतं रक्षमाणाः सायप्रातः सौमनसो वो अस्तु ॥

(अथर्ववेद ३।३०।१-७)

wise people, protect your vital interests. Let your mornings and evenings be happy and harmonious.

A child just born finds himself placed in a circle of loving persons, mother, father, brothers and sisters, all bestowing all they can upon the tiny newcomer. He is the centre of all interests. All others are the spokes of the family wheel. This is the best beginning of human-life. Can you imagine a better one ? This all is possible only in a family. Therefore, it is but fair that our society should begin with our family.

And how does family begin ? Marriage makes family. No marriage; no family. In Sanskrita, it is called *Vivaha* or special bond. There is no bond stronger or sociologically more important than the bond by which the husband and the wife are united together. The Vedic verse says:—

“Samane yoktre saha vo yunajmi.”

“I tie you round the same yoke”. The husband and the wife are, so to speak, two horses yoked round the same yoke. There should be perfect harmony between them. They have to march together, step by step, tied by that invisible rope than which there is nothing stronger, the rope of conjugal love.

Providence has endowed man and woman with reciprocal magnetic attraction. This attrac-

tion is the root of our multiplication. The consummation of the multiplication depends much upon the natures of marriage bond. When we take into consideration the antiquity of the Vedas and at the same time the amazingly consummate phraseology which the Vedas use in connection with marriage, we cannot but be struck with the loftiness of the Vedic ideal. The Rg. Veda says:—

Ihaivastam ma vi yaustam vishvam ayur vyashnutam. Kridantau putrair naptribhir modamanau sve grihe.\* (Rg. Veda X-85. 42)

O bride and bride-groom, you two stay here. Never be disunited (i.e. be faithful, never think of any other man or woman). Enjoy the full span of life. Play with children and grand children. Be happy in your home.

This is the ideal of conjugal fidelity. No improvement is possible upon this. Since the creation of the world, up till now, hundreds of codes have been made by reformers of all ages and countries but no code has given a better description of family life. This verse of the Rg. Veda clearly shows :—

(a) Strict monogamy should be the law.

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\* इहैव रतं का त्रियोष्टं विश्वमायुर्व्यशनुतम् ।

ऋ० १०।८४।१२) क्रीडन्तौ पुत्रैर्नप्तृभिर्मोदमानौ स्वे गृहे ॥

- (b) Nothing moral, mental or physical should be done by either party which might produce a rift in the lute.
- (c) The crowning success of a married life lies in the birth of healthy children.
- (d) Harmoniousness of family life should be the aim.

As the Vedas look upon every phase of life from culture point of view, i.e. from the point of actualization of seed-powers of souls, marriage and married life are also regarded as steps towards that goal. · Reproduction of species can take place even automatically from the lust of males and females. It does not need the institution of marriage. All animals reproduce. But there is a material difference between wild growth and planned culture. Marriage is a planning. Constancy, self-control, love, self-abnegation are the virtues which can be best developed during married life only. If there is no marriage, all relationship, fatherhood, motherhood, brotherhood, sisterhood, unclehood and aunt-hood, will become meaningless. The Vedic seers saw it even at the dawn of human life and they laid out a plan which holds good for all times. Culture of all virtues is difficult. An ordinary vegetable farm needs skill and care of



the farmer. Much more the cultivation of the virtues referred to above. The Vedic seers contrived several instruments to ensure the best results. The first of the instruments was the rituals at the time of marriage. Pledges were taken from both the parties in the presence of the leaders of the society. Appeal was made to the spiritual aspect of the institution. Perambulations round the sacred fire added to the solemnity of the occasion. Help of God was invoked. Men, who counted, were asked to shower their blessings and to help in keeping the pledges. A few extracts from the Vedic rituals will not be out of place.\*

There are five chief parts of the marriage ceremony. We give here mere outlines.

The first part is the *mandapa* ceremony which begins with Homa and prayers, at the houses of the bride, and bride-groom separately. It is a sort of invocation of God's blessings for the sacrament which is going to be performed soon after. For theists it is an appropriate beginning to all sacred actions. It denotes a very high stage of society in which marriages are based not upon force but upon goodwill and agreeableness of the parties. We leave

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\*Extracts taken from "*Marriage and Married Life*" by the author. Pp. 122-132.

it here, as Homas and prayers are usual introductions to all ceremonies and they are mostly alike in form.

The second part is *Madhu-parka* ( मधुपर्क ) , commonly known as *Dvarapuja* or door-worship which is synonymous to reception. Here the bride-groom is received by the bride and her people at her father's house. The bride-groom is the chief guest and the bride the chief host. The ceremony is very very impressive.

The bride says :— ओ३म् षिटरो षिटरो षिटरोः प्रतिगृह्यताम्  
—Here is the seat, kindly accept it.

The bride-groom replies :— ओ३म् प्रतिगृह्णामि  
—Thanks. I accept it.

Then the bride says :— ओ३म् पाद्यं पाद्यं पाद्यं प्रतिगृह्यताम्  
—Here is water, kindly wash your feet.

The bride-groom says :— ओ३म् प्रतिगृह्णामि —  
Thanks, I accept it.

The bride says :— ओ३म् अर्घोऽर्घोऽर्घ्यः प्रतिगृह्यताम्—Here  
is water to wash your face, kindly accept it.

The bridegroom takes it with the formula  
ओ३म् प्रतिगृह्णामि “Thanks, I accept it.”

Then, ओ३म् आचमनीयमाचमनीयमाचमनीयं प्रतिगृह्यताम्—  
Here is water for you to drink (literally, sip).  
Kindly accept it.

The bridegroom accepts it with the same formula.

Then, मधुपर्को मधुपर्को मधुपर्क. प्रतिगृह्यतम्—Here is Madhuparka, kindly accept it.

Be it noted that among Aryas all eating begins with *Achamana* (आचमन) or sipping of water. And *Madhuparka* is a mixture of curd and honey—a sweet thing, offered sweetly and received with equal sweetness. The three verses to be read by the bridegroom at this occasion are so sweet that we cannot help giving them\* :—

(१) ओ३म् भूर्भुवः स्वः । मधु वाता ऋतायते मधु क्षरन्ति सिन्धवः ।  
माध्वीर्नस्सन्त्रोषधीः ॥

(२) ओ३म् भूर्भुवः स्वः । मधु नक्तमुतोषसो मधुमत् पार्थिवं रजः ।  
मधु द्यौरस्तु नः पिता ॥

(३) ओ३म् भूर्भुवः स्वः । मधुमान् नो वनस्पतिर्मधुमाँ अस्तु सूर्यः ।  
माध्वीर्गविो भवन्तु नः ॥

Here the bride and the bridegroom are thing the sweetness of their hearts with the sweetness

\*Om Bhur, Bhuvah, Svah are benedictory phrases. Sweet are the breaths of winds. Sweet is the flow of rivers. Let hearts be full of sweetness for us. Night is sweet and so is the dawn. Sweet is earthly sand. Let our fatherly sky be sweet. Let vegetable kingdom be sweet for us and sweet the sun (that helps their vegetation). Let cows be sweet for us. (Rv.1-90.6-8)

of nature. They are in a sweet mood and everything they look upon or think of appears sweet. Nobody will call this ceremony tedious if he understands the meaning. What song can be sweeter ? This hospitality offered by the sweet bride herself teaches another lesson too. It is thus that the wife should receive her husband in actual family life, when wearied in limbs and worried in mind, he wends his way homeward to find solace in the sweet reception of his wife. Verily sweet are the joys of home, but it is wife that makes home really sweet. There is a difference of chalk and cheese between hôtel life and home life.

The offer of a cow is the last item of the reception. A cow is an indispensable member of a Hindu family as all life depends upon milk.

The third or main part is the *panigrahana* (पणिग्रहण) or hand-grasping-ceremony. It is a rather lengthy process consisting of numerous small items. The first thing is the giving-away of the bride by the father, with the formula :—

ओ३म् अमुकगोत्रोऽपन्नमिमममुकनाम्नीमलङ्कृतां कन्यां प्रतिगृह्णानु  
भवान् !

“Please accept this well-dressed girl, named so and so, born in such and such family.”

followed by a formal acceptance of the husband by grasping the hand of the bride. Now they become husband and wife in the eye of law and come to the sacred hearth to offer joint oblation to fire. As soon as they reach there, they both jointly recite the following verse :—

ओ३म् समञ्जन्तु विश्वे देवाः समापोहृदयानि नौ ।

सं मातरिश्वा सं धाता समुदेष्ट्री दद्यातु नौ । (ऋग्वेद १०।८५।४७)

“Let all, present here know that our hearts have mingled together water-like. Let breath, let God, let the instructress (goddess of learning) keep us joined.”

We leave undescribed the details of oblations, which, though significant, might sound stale to the reader.

The next important item is four perambulations round the sacred fire preceded by stone-climbing ceremony. There is a stone-slab on which the bride is asked to put her foot. The bride-groom reads :—

ओ३म् आरोहेयमश्मानमश्मेव त्वँ स्थिरा भव ।

अभितिष्ठ पृतन्यतोऽ वबाधस्व पृतनायतः ॥

“Ascend this stone and be firm like a rock. Be firm against enmity-sowers. Overcome quarrelsome people.”

And also

ओ३म् कन्यला पितृभ्यः पतिलोकं पतीयमप दीक्षामयष्ट । कन्या उत-  
त्वयी वयं धारा उदन्या इवातिगाहेमहि द्विषः ।

“This girlie, (पितृभ्यः अग्रे) leaving parents, has accepted (पतिलोकं) the husband’s family and (पत्नीयं दीक्षान्) the husband’s creed. We may dip deep—as if in a mingled stream, O girl, with thee. Let us be away from jealousies.”

The hair-loosening ceremony which is also one of the minor items is worth noting. The bride-groom takes the bride to a private room and there unties the knot of the hair of her head with these verses :—

ओ३म् प्र त्वा मुञ्चमि वरुणस्य पाशाद् येन त्वा बध्नात् सविता सुशेवः ।  
ऋतस्य योनौ मुकृतस्य लोकेऽरिष्टां त्वा सह पत्या दधामि ।

ओ३म् प्रेतो मुञ्चामि नामुतः सुबद्धाममुतस्करम् । यथेयमिन्द्र मीढ्वः  
सुपुत्रा सुभगासति । (ऋग्वेद १०।८५।२४-२५)

“ I free thee from restrictions of the law by which thy good father (सविता सुशेवः) hitherto bound thee (meaning life of celibacy). (Now I am marrying thee and thy maidenhood comes to an end by my touch of thy hair). With me, thy husband, thou shalt live a life of righteousness and charity.

“ I free her from the obligations of here (meaning her father’s family), of course, not of there (meaning the husband’s family). Now she stands well bound, that she, with her valiant husband, might have good luck in worthy progeny.”

Now the husband and the wife come again to the sacred hearth and walk seven steps together in the presence of the people with significant vows. The husband says : —

मा सव्येन दक्षिणमतिक्राम् ।

“Let not thy left foot out-do thy right foot (i.e., be constant and consistent ).”

Each step has separate vows :—

(१) ओ३म् इष एकपदी भव सा मामनु व्रता भव विष्णुस्त्वा नयतु पुत्रान विन्दावहे । बहूस्ते सन्तु जरदष्टयः ।

1. Take the first step for the sake of food (livelihood). Follow me in my vows. Let God be thy guide. May we get children. Let the progeny be manifold and long-lived.

(२) ओ३म् ऊज्जं द्विपदी भव मामनुव्रता ... ..

2. Take the second step for power. Follow me in my vows etc. etc.

(३) ओ३म् रायस्पोषाय त्रिपदी भव सा ... ..

3. Take the third step for wealth and prosperity. Follow me in my vows etc. etc.

(४) ओ३म् मयोभवाय चतुष्पदी भव ... ..

4. Take the fourth step for happiness. Follow me etc. etc.

(५) ओ३म् प्रजाभ्यः पंचपदी भव ... ..

5. Take the fifth step for progeny. Follow me etc. etc.

(६) ओ३म् ऋतुभ्यः षट्पदी भव ... ..

6. Take the sixth step for seasonal equipment. Follow me etc. etc.

(७) ओ३म् सखे सप्तपदी भव ... ..

7. Take the seventh step for the close union. Follow me etc. etc.

Now they touch the heart of each other with the following verse :—

ओ३म् मम व्रते ते हृदयं दधामि । मम चित्तमनुविनं ते अस्तु । मम वाचमेकमना जुषस्व प्रजापतिष्टवा नियुनक्तु मह्यम् ॥

“I put thy heart into my vow. Let my mind be in accordance with thy mind. Follow my word with pointed attention. Let God join thee with me.”

This part of the ceremony being over, the husband touches the bride's forehead and addresses the people attending :—

सुमंगलीरियं बधूरिमां समेत पश्यत । सौभाग्यमस्यै दत्त्वा याथास्तं विप-  
रेतन ।

“Here is my auspicious wife. Come ye and see. Bless her before you go. Be not unfriendly to her.”

(Rv. X-85.33).

People thereupon say :—

ओ३म् सौभाग्यमस्तु, ओ३म् शुभं भवतु ॥

Let fortune attend you. Let everything be all right.



Then takes place the Pole-seeing ceremony (ध्रुवदर्शन).

The bridegroom points at the Pole star.

ध्रुवं पश्य (Look at the Pole star).

The bride—पश्यामि (I see).

ओ३म् ध्रुवमसि ध्रुवाहं पतिकुले भूयासम् ।

“Thou art Dhruva or constant . May I be constant in my husband’s family.”

Bride-groom—अरुन्धतीं पश्य ।

Now look at the Arundhati (a small star of this name).

Bride—पश्यामि (I see).

ओ३म् अरुन्धत्यसि रुद्धाहमस्मि ॥

Thou art Arundhati (literally, not under a check), but I ‘rudha’ under control.”

(How poetic. How beautiful. Marriage takes away freedom).

Now the bride-groom exclaims :—

ओ३म् ध्रुवाद्यौ ध्रुवा पृथिवी ध्रुवं विश्वमिदं जगत् । ध्रुवासः पर्वता इमे ध्रुवा स्त्री पतिकुले इयम् ॥

“Constant is the sky, constant this earth; constant this universe; constant are these mountains; constant this woman in the husband’s house.”

The next part, the last one, is when the wife comes to the husband's house. Here again she is brought to the sacred fire and the husband most beautifully confers upon her all the rights of her family. Just mark :—

ओ३म् सम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव । सम्राज्ञी श्वश्रूवां भव । ननान्दरि  
सम्राज्ञी भव सम्राज्ञी अधिदेवेषु ॥

(ऋ० १०।८५।४६)

“Be co-ruler with thy father-in-law, be co-ruler with thy mother-in-law, be co-ruler with thy sisters-in-law and co-ruler with thy brothers in-law.”

The significance of this declaration is very great. The bride was up till now a member of her father's family. Now marriage has brought her in a new home. Here she is quite a stranger. The husband consoles her and says that her marriage with him has made this home her own. She is the mistress of the house. She has the same rights here as his father, mother, brother, or sister. She is verily the queen. Those who say that woman's position is low in a Hindu family are wrong. This is the beginning of married life. But rituals, are rituals. In order to be really meaningful they need the fortification of social sanction and social atmosphere. To ensure this, sex-infidelity was regarded as the most heinous crime. A fence of

barbed wires was put round the family life so that no foreign element might come in. For various breaches of faith, various stonements were prescribed. All efforts were made by legislation, by social sanction, by tradition and by atmosphere to keep family integrity in tact. This was thought essential for culture.

There is hardly any virtue, however, undisputed its merit, which has not invoked revolt in some quarter of the society. Marriage too is no exception. From time to time revolts were set up against marriage. They can be divided into two classes. Some revolted because they found the institution corrupted, and instead of reforming the institution on the old Vedic lines, they advocated its total abolition. Plato the great Greek philosopher has no place for marriage in his sociology. In his *Republic*, he advises king-philosophers to so subtly arrange the mating of best men and best woman of the society that the country might get the best progeny. Happily the experiment was never tried. Wise people of all ages and times have pronounced the scheme as chimerical. While framing his logic, Plato woefully ignored human psychology. The institution of marriage has found new foes in the present communists. They look upon marriage and family ties as undue restrictions.

Why should not every man and every woman be directly connected with the society, as other animals ? Why should there stand family between the individual and the society ? Does it not look unnatural ? Marriage, they say, is a sort of enslavement, forfeiture of liberty, an undesirable convention coming down from our unwise forefathers. The proposal finds a ready support from young men and young women whose mouths water at the prospects of an unrestricted life of pleasure. The temptations are really too strong. But they forget the other side of the picture. Fortunately, the experiments so far made have been few and far between, and those too have not been very successful. No marriage-less society has yet been formed anywhere. Wherever young persons have gone beyond limits, they have met with rebuffs. But communists are everywhere busy with anti-marriage propaganda. How should basic doctrines of communism be incompatible with marriage is a difficult question. There is a tendency to attribute every good or bad thing to capitalism. I do not think that marriage has anything to do with capitalism and that abolition of marriage is a necessary corollary to communism. It may be that certain fathers of communism expressed their dis-approbation of the institution

of marriage. But why should it be a creed with the communists ? The fact is that materialistic out-look created by communistic teachings has made men more sensuous. His power of resistance having gone, he is a ready prey to self-indulgent temptations. That it is fraught with danger can well be known from the following article of Mahatma Gandhi published in the *Young India*, June 3, 1926.

“ A correspondent, whom I know well, raises an issue, I take it, for purely academic interest, because I know the views he has set out are not his. ‘Is not our present day morality unnatural ?’ he asks. If it was natural, it should have been the same everywhere in all ages, but every race and community seems to have its own peculiar marriage laws, and in enforcing them men have made themselves worse than beasts. For, diseases which are unknown amongst animals are quite common amongst men; infanticide, abortions, child-marriages, which are impossible in the brute creation, are the curse of the society that holds up marriage as a sacrament, and no end of evil results have sprung from what we uphold as laws of morality. And, the miserable condition of Hindu widows—what is it due to, but to the existing marriage laws ? Why not go back to nature,

and take a leaf out of the book of the brute creation ?

“ I do not know whether the advocates of free love in the West resort to the argument summarised above, or have any stronger reasons to put forth, but I am sure that the tendency to regard the marriage bond as barbarous is distinctly Western. If the argument is also borrowed from the West, there is no difficulty about meeting it.

“ It is a mistake to institute a comparison between man and the brute, and it is this comparison that vitiates the whole argument. For, man is higher than the brute in his moral instincts and moral institutions. The Law of Nature, as applied to the one, is different from the Law of Nature as applied to another. Man has reason, discrimination and free-will such as it is. The brute has no such thing. It is not a free agent, and knows no distinction between virtue and vice, good and evil. Man, being a free agent, knows these distinctions, and when he follows his higher nature shows himself far superior to the brute, but when he follows his baser nature can show himself lower than the brute. Even the races, regarded as the most uncivilised on earth, accept some restriction on sexual relations. If it be said that the restriction is itself barbarous, then, free-

dom from all restraints should be the law of man. If all men were to act according to this lawless law, there would be perfect chaos within twenty-four hours. Man being by nature more passionate than the brute, the moment all restraint is withdrawn, the lava of unbridled passion would overspread the whole earth and destroy mankind. Man is superior to the brute inasmuch as he is capable of self-restraint and sacrifice, of which the brute is incapable.

“ Some of the diseases that are so common at present day are the result of infringement of marriage laws. I should like to know a single instance of a man, strictly observing the restraint of the marriage bond, having suffered from the diseases the correspondent has in mind. Infanticide, child-marriages and the like, are also the result of the breach of marriage laws. For, the law lays down that a man or woman shall choose a mate only when he or she has come of age, is healthy and capable of restraint, and desires to have progeny. Those who strictly obey this law, and regard the marriage-bond as a sacrament, have never an occasion to be unhappy or miserable. Where marriage is a sacrament, the union is not of bodies but the union of souls, indissoluble even by the death of either party. Where there is true

union of souls, the re-marriage of a widow or widower is unthinkable, improper and wrong. Marriages, where the true law of marriage is ignored, do not deserve the name. If we have very few true marriages now-a-days, it is not the institution of marriage that is to blame, but the prevailing form of it, which should be reformed.

“The correspondent contends that marriage is no moral or religious bond but a custom, and a custom which is opposed to religion and morality, and hence deserves to be abolished. I submit that marriage is a fence that protects religion. If the fence were to be destroyed, religion would go to pieces. The foundation of religion is restraint, and marriage is nothing but restraint. The man who knows no restraint has no hope of self-realisation. I confess, it may be difficult to prove the necessity of restraint to an atheist or a materialist. But he who knows the perishable nature of flesh from the imperishable nature of the spirit, instinctively knows that self-realisation is impossible without self-discipline and self-restraint. The body may either be a play-ground of passion, or a temple of self-realisation. If it is the latter, there is no room there for libertinism. The spirit needs must curb the flesh every moment.



“ Woman will be the apple of discord, where the marriage bond is loose, where there is no observance of the law of restraint. If men were as unrestrained as the brutes, they would straightway take the road to destruction. I am firmly of opinion that all the evils, that the correspondent complains of, can be eradicated not by abolishing marriage, but by a systematic understanding and observance of the law of marriage.

“ I agree that whereas amongst some communities marriage is permitted amongst very near relations, it is prohibited among other communities ; that whereas some communities forbid polygamy, some permit it. Whilst one would wish that there was a uniform moral law accepted by all communities, the diversity does not point to the necessity of abolishing all restraint. As we grow wise in experience, our morality will gain in uniformity. Even today, the moral sense of the world holds up monogamy as the highest ideal, and no religion makes polygamy obligatory. The ideal remains unaffected by the relaxation of practice according to time and place.

“ I need not reiterate my views regarding

re-marriage of widows, as I consider re-marriage of virgin-widows not only desirable, but the bounden duty of all parents who happen to have such widowed daughters.” \*

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\*Extract taken from *Marriage and Married Life* by the author, p. 47—50.

## CHAPTER XVI

### DEATH AND AFTER

Materialistic view of life takes no cognizance of death or after. Why should it? Death is the close of life. And all that pertains life should cease when death overtakes it. But if death is the end of all, there is no question of culture. The cessation of the life of seed is not the realization of its potentialities. The struggle for the continuation of existence has some meaning. You struggle to live and not to die. Hence the real culture should take a due notice of our past, our present, as well as of our future. The Vedic culture does so remarkably well. The Vedic philosophy looks upon the souls not only as immortals but eternal. There was no time when they were not and there will be no time when they will not be. Thus the souls being allowed a never ceasing eternality, the present life is but a bivouac, a link in a long chain of lives. These lives are but stages in which the seed-powers of the soul undergo an evolution.

Different species have different spans of life. Even human life has incalculable variations. Some

men live only for minutes. Others attain even a century of years or more. It will be absurd to regard these lives as self-sufficient units. They serve no purpose. They can have meaning only so far as to be short stages of a very long journey. This leads to the doctrine of *transmigration of souls* which is the corner-stone of the Vedic culture. Apart from logical and psychological subtleties of the principle, even if we look at the question from mere culture-point of view, the value of transmigration is very high. From the sowing of the seed up to the reaping of the fruit there is a long series of stages of various lengths which all contribute towards the evolution of the seed-powers. Then the life of the seed does not end there. It existed before it was sown. It must exist after it has bloomed into a fully-grown stage of evolution. Think of a babe who dies an hour after he is born. If this one-hour's life is the only life of his, what evolution has he gone under? Why did nature call him to life and why has he been sent back to the world of non-existence? If you say that nature is so fickle, the whole question of culture comes to nothing. What would culture mean when nature is so fickle? A chance-life of a hundred years is as good or as bad as a life of a few seconds. Culture

in order to be a culture should be more enduring. Every succeeding stage of a plant bespeaks the skill and sagacity of the farmer. Culture is possible only in a world of certain and unflinching laws. The Rg. Veda says :—*Ritam cha satyam cha abhiddhat tāpsō-dhyajayata.* *Rita* means Law. *Satya* means the actual world. The verse means that the law and the world which is strictly governed by law are brought into revelation by the all-wise and all-active God. There is nothing fickle in nature. It is perfectly teleological. Every item of life has a meaning. And what is that meaning. It is the culture of the souls. This culture should not come about by magic. If the short undeveloped lives of minutes, hours or even a few years are regarded as self-sufficient, the huge waste which meets our eye is simply appalling. Is nature so wasteful ? If I am allowed to live only a few hours, a duration quite insufficient for my development and this is the only life I obtain, of what use is it to me ? The cultures which do not admit of the spiritual existence of souls or their eternality cannot solve the problem. They are too shortsighted. An insect which is born in the morning, grows at noon and dies in the evening cannot think of those problems of life which a statesman, or a scientist, or a philosopher of ad-

vanced age can. The Vedas neither inculcate the theory of the soul ending with the physical death, nor that of eternal condemnation after death. Theirs is a message of hope. It is never too late to mend. If you fail in this life, try in the next. Rome was not built in a day. Nor can full development of a soul take place in one life. Beatitude, internal beatitude, the beatitude which does not pour forth from outside like a cloak of cloth or the body, but grows internally step by step, like the skin, cannot be obtained in such a short time as one life. Those who do not believe in the doctrine of transmigration of soul do not understand the value of realities of life. Life for them is a chance growth.

The whole question of culture turns upon one question. What is the nature of the thing to be cultured? A thing that does not exist cannot be cultured. A thing that is absolutely perfect cannot be cultured. Only that thing can be cultured which is susceptible to deterioration by outer influences. Such is the nature of the soul. In the Vedic literature it has often been compared with air which is neither cold nor hot, but, which becomes cold by coming in contact with water, and gets hot by coming in contact with fire. In this world, there is a constant struggle between

matter and the spirit. Material things invade us from all sides. If we are weak, we fall victim to the snares or threats of matter and get enslaved. If we are strong, we dominate over matter and use it at our will. It is said in the Upanishad that the material bodies are our cars. We are the travellers. As long as cars are in our control, we can reach our destination. As soon as cars go out of our control, we meet our destruction. This truth is by no means difficult to realize. We meet such experiences every day. There is hardly any body who does not feel the strength of wordly temptations. Our strength to combat those temptations depends upon the extent of our culture. This is the measure of our culture. Can we wrestle successfully with matter? If we can, we are cultured. This is the difference between a saint and a sinner. What is sin if not the weakness to yield to temptations?

Now, this strength to withstand temptations comes by the realization of our spiritual nature. Generally we are so engrossed in material affairs that we forget what we are. We begin to feel that we are only eating or drinking entities and as soon as these wants are satisfied, we feel gratified. This is the end of our activities. We need no more. This is the lowest rung of the ladder of our cul-

ture. We are swine-like, most uncultured. Our culture begins with the gradual realization of our self as a non-material spirit. The more we realize this fact, the more we are cultured.

But this realization does not come at once. Like all cultures, it is a long process. We have to rise step by step. Our present life is too short for such an achievement. Even if we are fully awake, we can obtain only a partial success. Take an analogy. A boy wants to be a great mathematician. How long does he need ? Supposing he belongs to a nation where even simple notation and numeration are not well known. He must learn his 3 R's. Then easy problems on arithmetic, algebra, geometry or trigonometry. How long does he need ? Supposing he is given only twenty-five years to live. Will he make some progress ? Now mathematics is one thing to be learnt. It is not all. The cultivation of one's faculties, so that one might get mastery over matter is a great thing. This must take several lives. Look at myriads of sentient beings. All on different levels. All rising slowly. Most of them stationary or almost stationary. Some of them faltering. Some of them even going back and then making amends for their weaknesses. Rise and fall ; fall and rise. This



is the way how souls develop their faculties. For them one life is quite inadequate. Nature must be very cruel indeed if for a few deeds or misdeeds it sends one to an eternal hell or eternal heaven. It must be most merciless indeed if it puts a full stop to our present life and offers to us no other chance to mend. We see so many living beings dying every day. What is their level of culture at the time of death ? Will all these lives be extinct after this death ? If they will, of what avail is the culture, however partial, so far gained ? Or will they be deposited at some place with their various degrees of culture so far gained ? If so, how will they utilize their present attainments ? Which is the place just fit to accommodate them ? These are the questions which naturally rise in one's mind. The only reasonable answer is what is given in the following Vedic verses :—

Punarno asum prithivi dadatu,  
 Punar dyaur devi punar antariksham,  
 Punar nah somas tanvam dadatu,  
 Punah pusa pathyam ya svastih.\*  
 (Rv. X-59.7)

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\*पुनर्नो असुं पृथिवी ददातु पुन दी देवी पुनरन्तरिक्षम् ।

पुनर्नः सोमस्तन्वं ददातु पुनः पूषा पथ्यां या स्वस्तिः ॥

(ऋग्वेद १०।५९।७)

“May the earth give us breath again and may the shining heavenly region and the atmosphere restore the same to us ; May Soma, all-creating God, give us body again (after our death) and may Pushan, the all-nourishing God, lead us on the path of peace and happiness.”

or

Punar mai tvindriyam punaratma

Dravinam brahmanam cha ;

Punaragnayo dhishnya

Yathasthama kalpayantamihaiva.\*

(Atharva Veda VII. 67.1)

“May I again receive my sense organs in my future life and may I receive my spirit, together with worldly possession and knowledge divine so that I may perform fire-offering on the altars and may ever attain prosperity.”

(Translation from Pt. Ayodhyaprasad's *Gems of Vedic Wisdom*, P. 160).

The long and short of the whole thing is that it is never too late. We can correct our mistakes in future lives. We can add to our past earnings. We can evolve what so far remains un-evolved. There are some who have acquired by teaching

\*पुनर्मेतिन्द्रियं पुनरात्मा द्रविणं ब्राह्मणं च ।

पुनरग्नयो धिष्णो यथास्थाम कल्पयन्तामिहैव ॥

(अथर्ववेद ७।६७।१)

and by tradition a sort of horror at the belief of reincarnation. They are loath to admit any sort of kinship or connection between a tiny insect, a cat or dog, a cow, an elephant, a savage and saint. How can an insect be a saint and a saint an insect? A hog wallowing in mud and saint with his prayerful life in a mosque, church or temple! But they forget that this view of theirs is only materialistic. They look at the corporeal bodies and not at the souls which dwell in them. The same man can dwell in a hotel, a hut, a small house, and even a palace. Kings living in palaces are doomed to live in a dirty prison cell. Men born in huts become kings and dwell in palaces. Our bodies are our dwelling houses. Our non-material souls are not so huge that insect-bodies may be too small for us, nor so tiny that elephant bodies may not accommodate them. To borrow an analogy from botany, our bodies are but the beds wherein our seed-powers grow. They are our culture-houses.

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